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Recuperando nuestro idioma:
Language shift and revitalization of
San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya Zapotec

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Recuperando nuestro idioma: Language shift and revitalization of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya Zapotec

by

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Abstract

Recuperando nuestro idioma: Language shift and revitalization of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya Zapotec

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This thesis will discuss the factors that lead to language shift from Zapotec to Spanish in San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya (SJT), and the challenges faced by language revitalization efforts that have emerged in the home and migrant communities. Today hundreds of Indigenous languages are widely spoken across the Americas; however, in the last century an increasing amount of language shift to the nation-state language has taken place in many Indigenous communities. In the Zapotec community of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya, located in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, about 39% of the town's population currently speaks Zapotec. However, the majority of speakers within this percentage are elders and adults. This means that the transmission of the Zapotec language to children has declined while Spanish language socialization has increased and is now the norm. Due to socioeconomic factors and neoliberal reforms in

Mexico, many community members have migrated to other Mexican states and the United States which has furthered removed Zapotec speakers from the home community.

The data for this research is based on 28 open-ended interviews with elders, adults, youth, children, and language activists and participant observation in SJT during the summer of 2013. I argue that the public education implemented by the Post-Revolutionary Mexican state in Tlacochahuaya during the 1930s influenced a language shift to Spanish. Many of those who had a negative schooling experience during this era, which prohibited and punished the use of the Zapotec language in the classroom, chose to raise their children with Spanish.

In SJT from 2009-2011 Zapotec tutoring lessons for children were offered by a retired teacher, and since March 2013 migrants residing in Los Angeles, CA have been uploading Zapotec language tutorials on YouTube. Although there is awareness of language loss, I argue that these efforts have been hindered by the absence of a healing process regarding negative schooling experiences and dismantling the language ideologies that continue to devalue the Zapotec language. This case study contributes to the literature of languages shift and revitalization by suggesting that both home and migrant communities have crucial roles in Indigenous language maintenance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

One Sunday morning in 1996, when my father had already left to work, I sat at the kitchen table to have breakfast with my mother, grandmother, grandfather, and uncles. At the beginning of the meal, the adults were reminiscing over the activities of the past week speaking in Spanish. However, halfway through the meal my ears were no longer registering the conversation, as they had switched to *dialecto*[1]. I had previously heard my mother and grandmother speak it with each other at the flea market, usually when they were discussing whether to purchase an item or not. In other occasions, I heard my mother speaking in *idioma* while talking to my *tía* Rosa who was on the other end of the telephone line in Santa Ana, California. During that Sunday breakfast my younger brother marched into the kitchen asking, "¿Porque hablan en Chino? (Why are you speaking in Chinese?) [2]. The first response was a burst of laughter at his innocent and incorrect correlation of *dialecto* to Chinese, another unknown language to us but one that we would hear in public spaces in San Jose, California. It is then that my mother corrected him and responded, "Hijo, no es Chino. Hablamos Zapoteco. (My son, that is not Chinese. We speak Zapotec)".

The Zapotec language that my maternal family speaks, as described in the story above, was not transmitted to my brother and me for reasons that I have come to further

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[1] Dialecto or idioma is interchangeable used by SJT community members to refer to the Zapotec language. However, it should be stated that Zapotec is a language family that has four subgroups: Valley, Isthmus, Sierra Norte, and Sierra Sur. The Zapotec from SJT is a Valley variant.

[2] Translations have been provided by the author.

understand through this research. I was born and raised in San Jose, California to Mexican migrant parents. My father was born in the *pueblo* of Santiago Papasquiaro, a town nestled in the mountains of the northern Mexican state of Durango, but the family migrated to Mexico City in the 1960s where he spent his teen years. My mother was born and raised in the *pueblo* of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya (SJT) located in the Central Valley region in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. My parents, whose first language is Spanish, were adamant that my brother and I learn and speak Spanish. Thus, I grew up bilingual in California where my first language was Spanish, which was spoken at home, and I began to learn and speak English in the third grade. However, I was not taught the Zapotec language, though I was exposed to it through the conversations among my maternal family.

My Spanish language acquisition allowed me to communicate with my family in California, and also with family members in Mexico. However, one of the differences in visiting Mexico City is that the only language spoken by my paternal family is Spanish, and in Tlacochahuaya I would hear a combination of Spanish and Zapotec-especially during family and community celebrations. My personal experiences of travelling to Mexico led me question why my generation, that is my cousins that were raised in Tlacochahuaya and California, was not taught to speak Zapotec. I have asked my mother if she had ever spoken a phrase or a few words to my brother or me in Zapotec as toddlers, to which she answered, "No." I followed up with the question if my father and her had at even discussed the possibility of her teaching us Zapotec to which she explained, "¿Si yo les enseño dialecto con quien lo iban hablar? Ni en Tlaco lo aprenden.

(If I taught you dialect (Zapotec), who would you have spoken it with? Not even in Tlaco do they learn it)". My mother's response reflects a concern of the lack of or minimal Zapotec speech community in which we could further develop and maintain our language skills. Furthermore, her comment signals a strong view regarding the Zapotec language from Tlacochahuaya: children and youth are no longer learning it. My mother's childhood experiences give insight in the already changing socialization practices that were occurring in Tlacochahuaya during the 1950s. Even though both of her parents are Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals, my mother recalls being raised in Spanish and she started speaking Zapotec at the age of eight when she went to temporarily live with her grandfather, a Zapotec-Spanish bilingual, and step-grandmother who was a fluent Zapotec speaker and knew very little Spanish. Thus, when she migrated to the United States in 1967 she did so with the memory of Zapotec language loss and decline already taking place. Once in the United States, she experienced discriminatory comments disregarding Zapotec as a language and labeled it as a "backward dialect because it was unwritten", or being belittled with the term "Oaxaquita" for being from the state of Oaxaca. In my mother's experience these comments surfaced from fellow Mexican migrant *paisanos*. Experiences that furthered influenced her decision to not transmit the Zapotec language to my brother and I.

Unfortunately my grandmother passed away on April 15, 2011 before I had the courage to ask her about her lived experience as a migrant Zapotec woman whose first language was Zapotec and was fluent in Spanish. It was during her funeral in Tlacochahuaya that a cousin mentioned to me that there was a teacher who had started to

offer Zapotec tutoring lessons for children in the community. At the moment I did not follow up with the details of this project due to the circumstances of my visit to the *pueblo*. However, I entered graduate school with the purpose of pursuing a research project that could contribute to these language efforts and understand the factors that have influenced community members to not transmit the Zapotec language. Thus, this study attempts to understand the process of language shift, changes in language socialization practices and emerging language revitalization efforts of the Zapotec language from San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya. I am focusing on this topic and the community of Tlacochahuaya because of maternal connection to the community established through multiple visits to the *pueblo*.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Since the 1990s, linguists and anthropologists have demonstrated that many of the world's languages are declining in use and transmission, thus labeling them as endangered. There are 6,700 known languages in the world, but 90% of the world population speaks only 100 of these languages, and the remaining 6,600 are maintained by small groups where each year the number of speakers is declining (Hinton 2003). Krauss has estimated that in the next 100 years, 90% of the languages that are spoken today will disappear due to the decreasing rate of language transfer (Krauss, 1992). This picture painted by Krauss is alarming and one that many scholars have addressed. However, there are many factors that challenge the process and efforts of language maintenance and revitalization.

The aim of this study is to understand the factors that lead to a language shift, from Zapotec to Spanish that has been unfolding since the generation of elders (60 years and older). The decline of intergenerational transmission of the Zapotec language is linked to changes in socialization practices. The neoliberal multiculturalism lens helps contextualize the challenges faced by emerging efforts and projects that aim to revitalize the Zapotec language during an era where economic and educational opportunities are still limited in Mexico, yet indigenous rights have been recognized.

Changes in socialization practices in the last four generations demonstrate a gradual language shift from Zapotec to Spanish, in a community where Spanish language contact has existed since 1558 with the construction of a Dominican convent (Instituto de Órganos Históricos de Oaxaca, A.C.). According to national statistics there are currently 30 people in SJT that are Zapotec monolinguals, signifying that in a town of 3, 000 people over 99% of the community speak Spanish (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía 2011). Today approximately 39% of the town's population speaks Zapotec; nonetheless, this is concentrated in the elder and adult generation (Martínez Hernández 2011). This is a reflection that the Zapotec language is not being transferred to the youth in the town. The community is aware of the current decline of Zapotec language transfer, and as reported in the 2011-2013 Municipal Plan of Development the town is in the process of language revitalization efforts. SJT is also a community that has engaged in U.S. bound migration since the Bracero Program of 1940s. However, increasing mass migration to the U.S. began in the 1980s, signifying a physical removal of Zapotec speaking members. This has further implications for the view and value of the Zapotec

language when socioeconomic progress is perceived to be more accessible with Spanish language acquisition.

From 2009-2011, a retired teacher volunteered and dedicated her time to revitalizing the language by offering Zapotec language tutoring classes. These tutoring classes were offered after school and were not part of the educational system. They were taught twice a week for one hour in a classroom adjacent to the town's church, which was shared with nuns who teach catechism classes. In March 2013, two SJT community members in the migrant diaspora, in consultation with the teacher, began to create Zapotec tutorial videos that are available on YouTube.com. As stated in the first uploaded lesson, the videos are an attempt to not only maintain the Zapotec language from Tlacochahuaya, but an oral rescue that aims to decrease Spanish loan words by using as a guide Fray Juan de Córdoba's Zapotec language description titled *Arte del Idioma Zapoteco* published in 1578. Thus, there have been and are efforts among SJT community members to address the issue of the decline of Zapotec language transfer and are working towards language revitalization.

The current situation in SJT is that the majority of children are not acquiring or being socialized in the Zapotec language, signifying a decline in language transfer. The domains of inquiry that that will be addressed in this study are language shift, socialization, ideologies, and revitalization. Thus to understand the factors that are influencing the declining rate of Zapotec language transmission and seek solutions as to how to reverse this process, the questions that frame this research are the following: What factors influenced a decline in Zapotec language transmission and a shift to Spanish

language socialization in Tlacochahuaya? Given that today the majority of children in the *pueblo* are not Zapotec speakers, especially in light of Mexican multiculturalism, what are the current efforts to maintain and/or revitalize the language?

With the adoption of NAFTA in 1994, Mexico declared itself as a supporter and player in neoliberal economics, while at the same time changing its constitution in 1992 to recognize, for the first time, its pluriethnic composition within the nation. In 2003, President Vicente Fox signed the Ley General de Derechos Linguisticos de Puebslo Indigenas which not only recognized the dozens of Mexican indigenous languages as national languages, but guranteed the linguistic rights of indigenous peoples and promised to further develop these languages. The reasons behind these reforms do not point to a government that wanted to correct the negative impact of past policies; rather in Mexico's case it took advantage of its indigenous population to showcase itself as progressive multicultural nation in the era of neoliberalism. Charles Hale's concept of 'neoliberal multiculturalism' explains the relationship between the recognition of new cultural right and neoliberal political economic reforms, which can be applied to Mexico (2005:12). Only certain indigenous practices are accepted within these reforms and recognition, but the socio economic restructuring to actually maintain and reproduce these practices are not implemented.

What is apparent in the case of Mexico is that there was a sudden shift of policy towards indigenous people, one from assimilation to recognition. However, the racialized rhetoric that fuels the logic of this discourse has not been dismantled within society or at

the national level. The shift in orietnation of the government demonstrates that the were political and economic interests behind recogntion. As Hale explains,

> Pragmatic politicians aligned with the modernizing capitalist elite led the way in renouncing its assimilationist implications, affirming instead that Guatemala is a multicultural society. Politicians of the left took a similar stance, leaving the distinct impression that *mestizaje* as epitomizing metaphor for nation-building had, in historical terms, run its course. (2002: 506)

What this suggests is that neoliberal multiculturalism, in the context of Latin American, is then the façade for what has replaced *mestizaje*. This is due to the fact that reforms and recognitions which are granted dictate and set the rules for what cultural ways are accepted. In Mexico, multiculturalism was not an act to reconcile its past marginalization and oppresion of indigenous peoples. De La Peña states, "In other words, the way in which the constitutional reform established 'multiculturalism' did not necessarily mean that Indigenous peoples would be recognized as political subjects" (288).

This further demonstrates that Mexico's development of multiculturalism and recognition of indigenous rights is flawed and one that has political motivation as its rationale. It is the new and contemporary method that is used to once again limit and accept certain aspects of the demands of indigenous peoples. The state is still determining what is valid and is acceptable because, "proponents of the neoliberal doctrine pro-actively endorse a substantive, if limited, version of Indigenous cultural rights, as a means to resolve their own problems and advance their own political agendas" (Hale 2002: 487).

Language shift in a community occurs when one language is replaced by another and results from a context where there is coexistence of two or more codes at tension (Garrett 2012). The precondition of this coexistence is a result of language contact; in the case of SJT this occurred with the introduction of Spanish into the community. While Zapotec has not ceased to exist in use and practice, as is evident by the 39% of the community members who speak it, what has occurred is that children are now being exclusively socialized in Spanish. This is the beginning of language death when the younger generation does not learn the language (England 2003). The elders' experiences of discrimination and prohibition of using Zapotec in public schools, starting in the 1930s, and Spanish being regarded as the language of socioeconomic achievement are factors that have given rise to language shift in SJT. As Garett explains, language socialization practices in some cases are the most important mechanism of language shift (2012). For these reasons, I analyze the language socialization practices of SJT within the context of language revitalization. The community is aware of the decline in language transfer; nonetheless, it is imperative to analyze if the language socialization practices support or hinder language revitalization.

Another imperative domain of this project is language ideologies because, "language ideologies influence the sociocultural contexts that shape language socialization and language ideologies are also among the many cultural values socialized through language use" (Riley 2012: 493). It is important to get a closer look and document the ideologies regarding the views about Zapotec language acquisition language acquisition and utility within the community. In SJT it seems that Zapotec is

valued as a language that should continue to be learned; however, the ideologies of Zapotec-Spanish bilingual acquisition are at tension. What seems to have happened is that Zapotec, historically transmitted orally, is now viewed as one that can be acquired through tutorials or in the education system. These ideologies are also important to gauge in relation to the language revitalization efforts since, "ideologies and socialization practices tend toward inconsistencies and ambiguities that undermine language acquisition" (Riley 2012: 500). In the case of SJT the language ideologies regarding the value, utility, and acquisition of the Zapotec language are crucial to understand the two-way relationship between socialization practices and revitalization goals.

While the focus on language socialization practices will give insights into the process of language shift and ideologies, I am also interested past and present language revitalization projects. Hinton and Hale explain the best case scenario, "language revitalization refers to the development of programs that result in re-establishing a language which has ceased being the language of communication in the speech community and bringing it back into full use in all walks of life" (5). However, an important aspect in community grassroots language revitalization is that before implementation there needs to be an assessment of language resources and vitality in planning the project (Hinton and Hale 2001). Thus the Zapotec tutoring classes are taking place with the willingness and efforts of a single retired teacher, but what is not clear are the goals of revitalization. It is unclear if goals are for children to grow up bilingual or obtain a basic knowledge of the language. As literature has shown language ideologies are shaped by language socialization practices that influence language revitalization

outcomes (Friedman 2012). Another important aspect is that language ideologies and use need to be assessed and aligned for language revitalization efforts to be fruitful (Grenoble and Whaley 2006). Thus, all these interrelated domains of language shift, socialization, and ideologies play an integral part in language revitalization efforts.

The importance of this study lies in the argument that if language maintenance requires that children continue to the learn the language (Hinton 2003), and language socialization encompasses the practices where novices are socialized into learning a language (Ochs and Schieffelin 2012); then it is important to look at language socialization practices within the context of language revitalization in SJT. Previous Oaxacan case studies have addressed Valley and Isthmus Zapotec language shift, changes in socialization practices, and language revitalization (Augsburger 2002; Pérez Báez 2009; Falconi 2011). This study contributes to the language revitalization literature by simultaneously analyzing the factors of language shift and language revitalization efforts in the context of Mexican multiculturalism, which has officially recognized indigenous languages and guaranteed their development and maintenance.

Furthermore, through the narratives of Tlacochahuayuenses this research contributes to the visibility of the Zapotec language that continues to be used by its speakers even though intergenerational transmission has declined. In other words, it challenges the rhetoric that indigenous languages are inevitably on a path towards disappearance, which can be interpreted as a neocolonial discourse that uses the rhetoric of the 'disappearing Indian'. Another aspect that makes this contribution unique is my own position as a descendent of this community and as member of the youth generation. I

am attempting to understand the reasons for the decline in Zapotec language transmission and contribute to language revitalization efforts, which I believe can also serve as a healing process and decolonizing practice. As descendent from Tlacochahuaya and visitor to the town since the age of two, I have both an insider and outsider perspective. This position enriched the research with knowledge from familial conversations and experiences in California and Oaxaca, which have occurred over the last 15 years. This dual position has its challenges and blessings. On the one hand my insider position, established through my previous visits to the community and through my family ties, allowed for intimate conversations and *confianza* (trust). For example one family, who I had first met during fieldwork, allowed me into their home to obtain Zapotec tutoring lessons from their children. At the same time, my outsider position, as I was born and raised in California, has also lead to community members questioning my interests in the history, traditions, and Zapotec language of Tlacochahuaya. A few times family members would make comments such as, "Mejor tú, que no naciste aquí, sabes más del pueblo que uno. (Instead you, who was not born here, knows more about the town than someone from here)". I would try to disrupt this notion by affirming that I have acquired a lot of this knowledge through our familial conversations. This is where I was challenged to reflect on my own position as a graduate student having the privilege, time, and resources to be able to conduct this research. I hope that this research project is fruitful to further advance the conversation regarding our community's Zapotec language.

METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

The fieldwork for this study took place during the summer of 2013 in the town of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya located 18km south of Oaxaca City, the state capital, and nestled between Tlacolula, the second biggest urban center of the region. I chose to live with family members which allowed the opportunity to conduct an ethnography of an intergenerational family structure that included members in the elder, adult, youth, and children generations. This allowed me to observe and participate in situations where Zapotec and Spanish language were in use, the quotidian routine and social life of four generations, and my uncle and aunt supported my interest in learning Zapotec by teaching me phrases in the language. Often times I was able to observe my *tío* Gustavo[3] and *tía* Natalia speaking Zapotec with each other and with other Zapotec speakers, usually adults and elders. However, this also allowed me to see instances where my uncle and aunt would use Zapotec with their adult and youth children, who self-identify as non-Zapotec speakers, and their grandchildren who self-identify and are identified by their parents and grandparents as non-Zapotec speakers. For example, my cousin Janet who would often help with the cooking would be asked by my aunt to give her an ingredient in Zapotec and she would answer in Spanish. There were also times were I observed that my uncle and aunt would also socialize their grandchildren with Zapotec phrases that would often seek for the assistance with a chore (i.e. bring me the broom). This gave me insight on how Zapotec and Spanish are used in the domain of the home, but also into the multiple

[3] The names of interviewees in this paper are pseudonyms, except in chapter 3 where language activists' real names have been used.

language repertoires within a family. Likewise, living with my family gave me access to their kinship and friendship networks which further helped me to seek formal interviews and build relations with other community members.

One of the main activities during my fieldwork was assisting my older cousin Janet from two to three times a week with her *puesto de gelatinas* (dessert and jello stand). The stand was located outside the *galera* (local market) and due to the foot traffic and neighboring vendors; this allowed me to become a familiar face. This participation allowed me to have many conversations with my cousin but also to chat with other vendors in the market place. When I introduced myself to community members they would often ask whose daughter or granddaughter I was, and through this space I was able to observe the sale of goods in a multidimensional linguistic market. I was also in contact on a weekly basis with the retired teacher who is the local expert and leading member of Zapotec language revitalization efforts in SJT. Our conversations would oscillate between her personal experience with the Zapotec language and the Zapotec tutoring lessons for children. I am indebted to her for not only sharing her lived experience with me, but she also allowed me to make copies of the materials that she used in tutoring lessons. She also recommended that I get in touch with a family who had a twelve year old boy and eleven year old girl who were born in California but had moved to SJT and had participated in the Zapotec tutorials. I contacted the parents who allowed me to work with their children by exchanging English classes for Zapotec classes. This unique opportunity allowed me to follow up with participants from the tutoring lessons to see how and if they had maintained an interest in the language. While

other family members asked me to teach English to their children, I would decline unless they were willing to also accompany me to the Zapotec tutoring lessons. I chose not to teach English to my younger relatives because for me this was a conflict of interest of my commitment towards Zapotec language revitalization and would further support the ideology that Zapotec is not worth learning.

While the majority of the fieldwork was spent in Tlacochahuaya, the proximity to Oaxaca City and Tlacolula made day trips accessible and an opportunity to observe the daily commute to the city where many from Tlacochahuaya go to work and/or study; and further notice the languages that community members use. On a few occasions I would accompany my *tío* Gustavo in the early morning to drop off my cousin Janet's children who attend elementary school in Oaxaca City. I would not miss the opportunity to accompany my aunt to the *Central de Abastos* (open air market) where I would see her in full swing and action with her *regataeo* (bargaining) skills which would often work to lower the prices on food items. In these outings I noticed that my uncle and aunt used Zapotec with each other to discuss the price of something, but all other interactions would be in Spanish. On another occasion, I accompanied my younger *tía* Hortencia to El Llano park in Oaxaca City where she works at an *agua frescas y nieves puesto* (a fruit waters and ice cream stand). The language of use with customers was Spanish, and also with her co-workers, which a few were from Tlacochahuaya and self-identified as passive or non-Zapotec language speakers. This experience gave me insight into the long work

hours (her shifts averaged 10 hours) and the roundtrip, two hour bus commute; spaces where Spanish language use dominates.

To supplement my participant observation and the informal conversations with community members regarding these topics, I conducted 28 formal semi-structured and open ended question interviews with 30 participants of four age groups: 10 elders (60 years or older); 8 adults (35-59 years old); 8 youth (18-34 years old); and 4 children who had participated in the Zapotec language tutoring classes. Some of the participants that were interviewed are my family members and I was able to meet community members through familial contacts and made friends through daily routines (i.e. I meet a university student at the convenience store that was located next door). The interviews provided an opportunity to get an intergenerational view of the causes for language shift, the interpretation of language loss, and how members viewed and were aware of language revitalization efforts. Interview questions were focused on three topics: educational experience, their individual socialization and if they were parents I asked them to discuss their children's socialization and upbringing, and their awareness and/or involvement with revitalization efforts or Zapotec language maintenance. Many of the interviews took place in the homes of the participants, were conducted in Spanish since I am not a Zapotec speaker, and were scheduled at a time most convenient for them. I have tried my best in this thesis to highlight the narratives of community members by providing their responses in Spanish followed by own translation to English.

THE NEED FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

There is a need for indigenous language revitalization, especially through grassroots efforts, because it can serve as a process of healing for years of oppression. As

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui stated, in her keynote address at the 2014 NAIS conference: decolonial practices must include the recovery, reclamation, and use of indigenous languages. Furthermore, as Smith explains, "Part of the exercise is about recovering our own stories of the past. This is inextricably bound to a recovery of our language and epistemological foundations" (39). Language revitalization then should be reoriented as a necessary tool for decolonization; because it is through language that knowledge, traditions, culture, and ways of life are interrelated. We are able to do research on indigenous languages today because there has been an ongoing resistance since 1492 and, "For speak communities awakening their sleeping languages, the sleeping metaphor encourage creativity and emergent vitality. There are *remembering* ancestral voices. Not just in the cognitive sense but also in the cultural sense" (Perley 263).

I acknowledge that I have a complex, layered, and every changing identity that is linked to quotidian experiences. Since I was 15 years old I have identified as indigenous, specifically Zapotec, and I have done it without knowing the language. I do think and know it is possible to claim an identity without knowing or practicing a specific element as identity is constantly (re)created and (re)constructed. However, I pursue this research and my own *aprendizaje* (learning) of Zapotec because it is an imperative decolonial praxis which scholars called upon for action (Smith 1999; Yellow Bird and Waziyatawin 2005). Part of the process of decolonization is challenging the policy and conditions that attempt to vanish these cultural elements and ways of living which are often expressed through language. In the case of Mexico, *indigenista* policies attempted to assimilate the Indian and have listed certain cultural markers such as dress and language to define who

is indigenous. However, I also believe that revitalizing and learning our indigenous languages is resistance against these policies. I approach learning Zapotec and conducting this research as resistance to the aims of the colonial legacy: to erase our history, culture, knowledge, and expression. With the understanding that these policies have been detrimental in our communities and have been internalized, I seek to take an active part in the linguistic and historical inheritance of my maternal family in contributing to Zapotec language revitalization efforts.

Oaxacan scholar Victor de la Cruz makes a call for decolonizing specifically in the area of indigenous language and philosophy. One of his main arguments is that researchers have felt entitled and used Western approaches for the study of indigenous philosophy without knowing the language. As a result, the knowledge production of scholars, such as Alfonso Caso and Joseph Whittecotton, is flawed precisely because they did not know the language and the fact that they did not consult speakers when doing their research (de la Cruz 1994). Thus, these works need to be decolonized and that is one of reasons why indigenous language vitality is imperative. As argued by de la Cruz, "la reconstrucción de este sistema y su desciframiento debe partir de la competencia lingüística que poseen actualmente los hablantes de este idioma y del análisis de las diversas lenguas funcionales en la que se ha fragmentado, en tanto depositarias directas de la cultura y memoria histórica de los binnigula'sa' [Zapotecos]" (132). Thus, in decolonial processes, language is crucial to revisit and reconstruct history that has been written and produced by non-native researchers. Decolonization is not simply a challenge

to the colonial structure but one that requires being critical of the inherited colonial practices that we often perform.

I hope that this project also serves as documentation of the emerging interests in reversing Zapotec language loss, and that this contributes as a platform to the understanding of how Zapotec has come to be displaced, and how to change it. This is an important study not just for SJT, as it discusses the current efforts in depth, but also for other communities, especially ones with a migrant diaspora, that are facing a similar language situation. Language revitalization research not only supports these efforts but this type of research gives insight into the ways, ideas, and practices that maintain colonialism present. In other words, it also reveals the things that we need to challenge to decolonize. As Meek explains, "This means that language endangerment is not just a repercussion of colonial assimilationist tactics- it is an effect of contemporary sociolinguistic practices, ideologies, and disjunctures" (2010: 53). This study presents and documents the emergence of a community's interaction with the complexities of reversing language loss when many of the social, economic, and power conditions and structures that contributed to the displacement in the first place have been not been dismantled.

THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis contains three chapters, where the first two answer the research questions mentioned above and the fourth is a conclusion with reflections and further recommendations. In chapter 2 titled, "*Lo que se esta perdiendo*: The Process of

Language Shift and Socialization", I argue that the negative schooling experience endured by elders influenced many to raise their children in Spanish; thus initiating a language shift from Zapotec to Spanish that has been occurring for the last four generations. The chapter starts off by offering a brief history of the community's foundation and Spanish language contact to further elucidate that up until the introduction of education, in the 1930s, Zapotec was the language of daily use. This is followed by a section where I discuss the aims of education in post-revolutionary Mexico which were linked to ideological goals of castellinization and modernization. In this same section I use the narratives of Tlacochahuayuenses to highlight the negative impact that this schooling had on community members. To further understand how language shift has taken place in Tlacochahuaya, the changes in language socialization are analyzed through an intergenerational lens. Chapter two concludes with a discussion on language ideologies of Zapotec, which I argue, constrain language revitalization efforts to take off.

In the chapter 3 titled " *Recuperando Nuestro Idioma*: Language revitalization efforts in the Home and Migrant Community", is focused on language revitalization efforts that have taken place in Oaxaca and California. I start off by reviewing language revitalization literature that often leaves out of the conversation indigenous languages that migrant with its speakers. This is followed by a review of Oaxacan case studies that give insight into the pervasive language shift phenomena in the region along with case studies of indigenous language revitalization in the United States. The second half of the chapter is focused on the revitalization projects of Zapotec from Tlacochahuaya and concludes with a section that discusses the challenges that these efforts have faced.

In chapter 4, I summarize the main arguments made in this thesis and provide recommendations for language revitalization amongst my community, which I hope will also serve other indigenous migrant communities. Suggestions for further research on this topic are also included.

Chapter 2: *Lo que se está perdiendo*: The Process of Language Shift and Socialization

Before European colonization, linguistic competition and hierarchies existed in the Americas where certain languages enjoyed prestige and were used for the exchange of goods among different groups (Harvey 2008; Nahmad Sitton 1998). However, the invasion and colonial project implemented in the late 15th century by European conquistadors and settlers initiated a process of language loss and change that continues to have repercussion until this day. The immediate arrival of Europeans brought warfare, disease, and enslavement, which declined the indigenous population and in turn impacted languages, cultures, and ways of life. However, indigenous peoples have resisted for over 500 years, such that today Latin America is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse areas in the world. Nonetheless, in the last century the decline of Indigenous language transmission has increased to levels never before seen in both North and Latin America.

During the colonial period in Latin America one of the main tools of conquest, used along with warfare, was the evangelization of Indigenous people. While some maintained that this should occur in *castellano*, the Spanish dialect spoken by a majority of colonizers, the clergy argued that evangelization of indigenous peoples should take place in their own vernacular (Hidalgo 2006). Thus, early on in the colonial period there was an investment of resources, mostly from clerical actors, in the studying and documentation of Indigenous languages such that the first grammars and dictionaries of

these languages were produced during this time. Such was the case of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya where Fray Juan de Córdoba retired and in 1578 published, with permission from the church, both a dictionary, *Vocabulario en Lengua Zapoteca*, and a grammar that contained religious data, *Arte en Lengua Zapoteca* (Manrique Castañeda 1966). However, even this contact with the Spanish language, be it through religion or administrative purposes, did not necessarily displace Indigenous languages at the rate that they are today declining in transmission. In this chapter I use the narratives of Tlacochahuayuenses to tell the story of the negative impacts of linguistic policy and make the argument that Mexico's public education in the post-revolutionary era influenced a decline in language transmission through the prohibition, punishment, and stigmatization of the Zapotec language. In the post-revolutionary period (after 1920) the public education that was implemented in Indigenous communities had as its goal to "finally solve the Indian problem", of which Indigenous languages were seen as the biggest obstacle. The education implemented during this period was meant to *castellanizar*[4] (Hispanicize) and instill an individualistic working ethic among rural and indigenous communities, so as to contribute to the Mexican nation-building project (Martinez Vasquez 1994; Bonfil Batalla 1996). The long time presence of the Spanish language in San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya points to the detrimental impact that rural education had such that a process of language shift from Zapotec to Spanish has been occurring in the last four generations. Today the majority of children are educated and socialized in Spanish while Zapotec is a language in use but in the background of their

[4] A process of assimilation to *castellano*, the language variant spoken by the Spanish colonizers.

upbringing. For Tlacochahuaya, Spanish was not only seen as the language of education but also as a tool of socioeconomic mobility.

In the following sections I will provide a brief summary of Tlacochahuaya's history with the Spanish language to show that up until the introduction of education in the 1930s, Zapotec was the main linguistic code in the community. This will be followed by a brief analysis of the ideological tenants that permeated Mexican education during the post-revolution period. The third section privileges narratives from community members regarding their educational experience to demonstrate how Zapotec was prohibited and punished. This is followed by a look at changes in language socialization practices to demonstrate how some community members internalized educational experiences which has led to a language shift from Zapotec to Spanish. I conclude with a brief but important discussion on language ideologies to demonstrate how these are at tension regarding the value and acquisition of Zapotec.

TLACOCHAHUAYA'S FOUNDATION AND SPANISH LANGUAGE CONTACT

To understand the impact of education on language shift in Tlacochahuaya, a brief history of the town and language contact is presented. It is estimated that in 1100 A.D. the Zapotec warrior Cochicahuala married into Zapotec nobility and celebrated the union in the lands that today make up the *pueblo* of Tlacochahuaya (Enciclopedia de los Municipios y Pueblos de México 2010). Such historical and ancestral existence of the community is furthered supported by the name of the *pueblo* which is not in Zapotec but rather in Nahuatl, the language of the Mexica. In Nahuatl the word Tlacochahuaya makes

reference to the wetlands or wet place as the lands on which the *pueblo* is situated were once swamps (Enciclopedia de los Municipios y Pueblos de México 2010; Taylor 1972). Thus at the time of colonization, Tlacochahuaya was already a historically founded town of Zapotec ancestry.

As compensation for Cortez's "discoveries" and acquisition of territory for the Spanish crown, he was given the royal title of Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca which included a vast territory made up of various communities, one of which was Tlacochahuaya (Taylor 1972). From the early beginning of the Spanish Viceroyalty, Tlacochahuaya has been in contact with the Spanish language and structure of colonial administration. The Domincan convent of SJT was founded in 1558 and was the site of prayer and retirement for many Dominican friars (Instituto de Órganos Históricos de Oaxaca, A.C.). One of the most famous friars to have retired in that convent was Fray Juan de Córdoba, who dedicated himself to documenting the local Zapotec language. His grammar and description of Zapotec from Tlacochahuaya was one of the first studies of the Zapotec language. As Margarita Hidalgo (2006) demonstrates and argues, it was not uncommon for friars to learn and document the indigenous languages of the communities where they were assigned. As a matter of fact, many believed that the best way to evangelize the indigenous population was not in the Spanish language, but rather in their own language (Hidalgo 2006). These early linguistic works were pursued to further extend the reach of colonization and Christian conversion. Despite the introduction of Spanish through the church and friars during the colonial period, in Tlacochahuaya the Zapotec language was the exclusive language of socialization and use until the

introduction of rural education in post-revolutionary Mexico. A claim supported by oral stories shared by elders. Although census data has been problematic in the way it counts and identifies indigenous populations (Cifuentes and Moctezuma 2006*),* census data and the community's collective memory signal that the Zapotec language was the primary linguistic code in the early 1900s. Spanish was not only brought into the community during the colonial period and through education, but also through Spanish speaking families that migrated to town. Tlacochahuaya's history and longtime presence of the Spanish language speaks to the impactful role of Mexico's post-revolutionary education and *castellanización,* which negatively influenced language socialization practices giving way to a decline of intergenerational Zapotec language transmission.

Reserving Language Shift (RLS) Theory

Tlacochahuaya, situated in the Valles Centrales (Central Valley) region[5], is surrounded by communities each with their own history and experience of language contact and maintenance. Arriving to Tlacochahuaya in late May 2013 gave me insight into the agriculture that takes place in the community. This practice characterizes Tlacochahuaya as a farming community amongst nearby towns such as Teotitlán del Valle and Santa Ana del Valle known for their *tapetes de lana* (wool tapestries). In the Central Valley, Tlacochahuaya is known for its production of garlic, *chile de agua*, and black beans-products that are sold in the Central de Abastos market in Oaxaca City or in the Sunday mercado of nearby Tlacolula. Precisely because I arrived at the end of May, I

[5] The state of Oaxaca is geographically and politically divided into eight regions: Cañada, Costa, Istmo, Mixteca, Papaloapan, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur, and Valles Centrales (Enciclopedia de los Municipios y Pueblos de México 2010).

was able to see the last stages of the black bean harvest. Tío Gustavo explained to me that once the pods are harvested from the fields they are brought back to the town. Growing up he recalls that farmers would use bark sticks to tap on the pods and get the beans out. Today this process is rarely used, and instead the pods are laid out on the street so that a car will roll over them to break the casting and release the beans. Once the beans have been released from the pods they are collected and sifted various times, by hand, to separate them from pebbles and debris. This new strategy is not the only change in agriculture that Tlacochahuaya has experienced. Tío Gustavo mentioned that previously Zapotec was also heard in the fields, but today Spanish is the language used when farming. In another instance, I was with tía Hortencia on the way to one of my grandfather's *terrenos* (plot of land) when we ran into one of my grandmother's cousin, tía Violeta, a Zapotec-Spanish bilingual elder. When I mentioned to her that I was going to live in the community for a few months to do research on the decline of Zapotec language transmission she mentioned the increasing costs of being a farmer, along with the declining interest of this occupation. Tía Violeta said, "Ya nadie quiere ser campesino. Menos quieren hablar Zapoteco, ya nadie está interesado por el idioma (No one wants to be a farmer. Even less do they want to speak Zapotec, now no one is interested in the language)". These two stories show not only the domain that the Zapotec language once held and the changes in farming, both on the techniques and as an occupation, but also gives insight into the community's awareness of Zapotec language loss.

I approach this chapter within the framework of Joshua Fishman's Reversing Language Shift (RLS) that he pioneered and is an expert of the theory. From this perspective the aim of RLS is to understand the factors that have led to a language shift within a speech community so as to better plan how to approach the task of bringing back the language to use. As he explains, "The location of shift in the total 'sociocultural space' of a speech community is an indication of just where the stresses and strains of cross-cultural contact have eroded the ability of the smaller and weaker to withstand the stronger and larger. However, social processes transpire along a time continuum, and both historical time and current time must be of concern to those who wish to fully understand language shift in order to counteract it" (Fishman: 55). It is important to understand and know the factors that influenced a language shift because one the goals of RLS is to bring back language transmission as a practice. Fishman explains, "But why is it, one may ask, that language shift often comes about without sustained planning, whereas RLS requires so much thought, effort and conviction? Perhaps it is because the very heart of mother tongue transmission (the usual but not inescapable goal of RLS) involves precisely those natural collective processes (home, family, neighborhood) which are not easily accessible to or influenced by social planning" (Fishman: 67).

Before grappling with language revitalization efforts, reversing language shift and language revitalization theory suggests and prescribes understanding the factors that have led to language loss and a task that should be undertaken first and foremost by the community as a grassroots effort (Fishman 1991; Hale and Hinton 2001; Grenoble and Whaley 2006). This does not mean that local, state, or national governments should not

be involved or support these efforts; however, there is a lot of ground work that the community can and should do in reflecting on what lead to the current decline of the language. Thus, one of the purposes of this study is to ascertain what factors, experiences and/or events have influenced Tlacochahuayuenses to diminish the transmission of the Zapotec language to their children and subsequent generations. My initial hypothesis of the processes that lead to language loss was U.S bound migration, which has been present in the community since the 1940s through the Bracero program, but increased during the 1980s (Sánchez Gómez and Barceló Quintal 2011). However, conversations with family members before arriving to Oaxaca gave me insight into considering and analyzing the role of education.

MEXICAN EDUCATION IN THE POST-REVOLUTION ERA

While independence movements in Latin American transferred power from the Spanish crown to *criollos,* what were not dismantled were the colonial influences which view(ed) indigenous peoples as uncivilized and inferior. After independence movements in Latin America, the colonial project was replaced with a nation-building project that sought to "modernize" the nation. The questions to be confronted with this project were how to 'deal' with the indigenous population and solve the "Indian problem" (Bonfil, Batalla 1996; Ossenback 1996). As Nahmad Sitton explains, "La idea central de las naciones recientemente formadas era lograr 'la unidad nacional' confundiendo esta unidad con la uniformidad cultural" (148). Thus, it is with this discourse that national unity is achieved through a homogenous cultural identity that the approach to indigenous

integration is conceived. As further explained by Bonfil Batalla, "In Mexico, civilizing has always meant de-Indianizing, imposing the ways of the West. Since the Indians were here and were the majority, the solution in a modern country was to civilize them"(105). Thus to achieve modernization and nationhood one of the first steps was a process of civilizing the Indian for integration. What has often been considered the best tool for this approach is education, as Ossenback explains, "Las políticas de integración consideraron siempre a la escolarización como el medio mas eficaz para lograr sus objectivos (Integration policies have always considered education as the most effective means to achieve their objectives" (11). Hence, very often the public and popular education that is planned and implemented through the state is tied to political and ideological goals of nationalism.

In post-revolutionary era Mexico (after 1920), this was a period where the ideals of social justice and equality that were fought for were integrated along with the goal of nation building. As Nahmad Sitton explains, "Generalmente, quienes defendian esta idea de educar para civilizar, generaban en sus planteamientos la tesis de la asimilacion y la incorporacion, para con ello lograr una sociedad homogenea que cada vez se pareciese más a las sociedades europeas, de donde venian todas las corrientes sobre desarrollo y educación. (Generally, those who defended this idea of educating to civilize, generated in their approaches the theory of assimilation and incorporation, to thereby achieve a homogeneous society that increasingly resembled European societies, where logics of development and education came from.)" (145). Although the offering of public education was done in a progressive spirit, to deliver the changes that the Mexican

revolution had promised; education was seen and used as the tool that would bring the Spanish language and modernization to rural and indigenous communities. As Bonfil Batalla describes, "A first goal gave a new face to an old Liberal longing: Mexico should be a culturally homogenous society. … It was thought that Mexico was a mestizo country and that the remnants should integrate themselves as quickly as possible. This was taken as an obligation by the revolutionary governments, and became converted into an important ideological element to reinforce their legitimacy and underlie their originality" (110). The foundations of Mexican public education were influenced by the ideals of modernizing its population and it was used as channel to garner national loyalty. ß

While agrarian reform and education are often relegated as the greatest achievements of the Mexican revolution, the ideology of the period was one that excluded the voices, knowledge, and opinions of the very people that these reforms were supposed to liberate from oppression. Perfectly described by Bonfil Batalla, "the conception of *indigenismo* as a theory and practice, designed and put into place by non-Indians to achieve the 'integration' of Indian peoples into the nation, continued. … It was a matter, like all *indigenista* policy, in which only the non-Indians, the 'nationals', those who exercised cultural control in the country and hoped to extend it further, had a voice"(117). Loyo Bravo explains the tools to achieve this integration,

> Los vehículos de esta asimilación eran la lengua castellana y la cultura occidental. Igual que había sucedido en otros países de Latinoamerica, por ejemplo en Ecuador, las responsabilidades de castellanizar a los indios, transmitirles nuevos patrones de vida y formarles un concepto de pertenencia a una nación, recayeron por completo en la escuela rural. A pesar de que hubo disidentes que oponían al etnocidio y al exterminio de las lenguas autóctonas

> y proponían alternativas, biculturales, la política que prevaleció en los años veinte dentro de la SEP fue 'la incorporación'. (142)

It must be mentioned that bilingual education was offered at the start of this public education in some communities. However, in the case of Tlacochahuaya is does not seem that this was the case and to this day bilingual education is not an option in the community. Nonetheless, even those who supported bilingual or bicultural education during the planning and formation of public education considered this a mechanism that would help with the transition towards Spanish language acquisition. Bonfil Batalla explains, "Thus, for example, it would be necessary to study indigenous languages and even create writing systems and didactic materials for them, but not with the aim of stimulating the further development of those languages. Rather, they were to be used as efficient, transitory instruments to facilitate learning Spanish and become literate in it, as their permanent language" (117). Hence, being bilingual in Spanish and an indigenous language was not the intent of education even though the formation of Mexico's nation building gave significant weight to *mestizaje*, the "mixing" of Spanish and indigenous peoples. Within this *indigenista* ideology there was no space, place, or utility for indigenous languages, and was one of the main elements that needed to be dealt with to modernize and civilize Mexico. In the following narratives of Tlacochahuayuenses we will see how this education was implemented and the impacts that it had amongst community members.

THE PROHIBITION, PUNISHMENT AND STIGMATIZATION OF THE ZAPOTEC LANGUAGE

The Spanish language has been present in Tlacochahuaya since the colonial era, and a consensus that surfaced in interviews with elders (60 years and older) suggests that that during their childhood Zapotec was a quotidian language. However, upon entering elementary school the use of the Zapotec language was not only stigmatized but also prohibited. Through an older cousin, I was introduced to an elder couple Don Arturo, 82 years old, and Doña Raquel, 78 years old, who are Zapotec-Spanish bilingual speakers. Doña Raquel and Don Arturo are *campesinos* and to this day they continue to harvest garlic. Their son Patricio helps them sell their product in nearby markets but much is sold in the town's *galera* (market). I had the pleasure of conversing and interviewing together Don Arturo and Doña Raquel while helping them clean garlic heads in their home, located behind the town's church. When asked about his Spanish language acquisition, Don Arturo recalls that he learned Spanish at school. As he explains "Yo en la escuela a varazos. Porque entrabamos a la escuela [con] puro zapoteco, y nos decía el maestro 'Ya no quiero que hablan esto. Van puro castellano'. (I learned at school with whippings. Because we would enter school [with] just Zapotec, and the teacher would tell us 'I don't want you to speak this. Just Spanish')". Don Arturo's anecdote demonstrates the harsh and violent pedagogical approach of teachers implementing popular education during this era. Not only was the approach violent, but what can also be noted from Don Arturo's story is that the linguistic pedagogical approach did not accommodate to the linguistic needs of the community and the education was not bilingual. Expecting Zapotec monolingual children to quickly learn the Spanish language was "solved" with

punishment. This is due to the fact that post-revolutionary education had as a goal to get rid of Indigenous culture and language as explained by Bonfil Batalla, "Schools would be built in the countryside and in the Indian communities, not to stimulate and systematize people's knowledge of their own culture, but so that they would learn elements of the dominant culture"(115). Thus, the goal of education that was imposed by the Mexican state in Tlacochahuaya during the 1930s had as its goal to quickly assimilate Zapotec language speaking children into Spanish speakers. Martinez Vasquez explains that speaking Spanish, "Esto último era importante para el Estado y la nación desde la Independencia. La Lengua Nacional se convirtió así en una material clave del curriculum de la instrucción primaria, no solo de Oaxaca, sino del país entero, donde había aun vastas regiones con población indígena (The latter was important for the state and the nation since independence. The National Language thus was key in the curriculum of primary education, not only in Oaxaca, but within the whole country, where there were still large areas with indigenous populations)" (44). Even if the goal of bilingual education was to transition monolingual children from Zapotec to Spanish language acquisition, it seems that this was not offered in the case of Tlacochahuaya.

This type of treatment towards children entering school with limited Spanish language knowledge and prohibition of Zapotec language use continued in Tlacochahuaya well into the next generation that was educated in the 1940s and 1950s. When recalling her own primary educational experience in Tlacochahuaya, from 1955-1961, my mother remembers being told by teachers that the Zapotec language had no role or place in the classroom. Similar anecdotes where shared by elders that went to school

before and around the same time as my mother. Even though I lived with *tía* Natalia, the eldest of my mother's siblings, during my stay in the *pueblo* I asked both her and *tío* Gustavo, her husband, for an interview together to attempt to weave together many of the stories that they shared with me. When I asked *tía* Natalia about her use of Zapotec in school she responded, "Puro español nada mas. Casi muy poco, no había porque estar hablando el Zapoteco. … Para que no se enredara, según, en la plática, para el idioma. A mí me decían eso para no revolver el español y dialecto. (Only Spanish, nothing else. Very little, there was no reason to be speaking Zapotec. … To not get knotted [tongue twisted], supposedly, in conversation, with the [Zapotec] language. They would tell me that, so I would not mix Spanish and [the Zapotec] dialect." Once again we see through this memory that the linguistic code that was expected at school was Spanish. However, *tía* Natalia's response also gives insight into the types of reasons they were given for separating the use and acquisition of Spanish and Zapotec, which is that by speaking or learning both languages one would get tongue twisted or mix the languages. This is a persistent language ideology that continues to resonate today and contributes to language loss.

Reflecting on his own educational experience, similar to his contemporaries, *tío* Gustavo's anecdote also sheds light on the previous generation's educational experience. He says, "Me dijeron [mis papas] pues, costo más trabajo ir a la escuela en esa época que cuando ya fui yo. Por eso decían no hay que fallar la escuela, porque el día de mañana nos iba hacer falta. Pero tan fuerte fue, así tan estricto, que no nos dejaron hablar el Zapoteco. (They told me [my parents] then, it was harder to go to school in that period

than when I went. That is why they would say to no miss school, because tomorrow we would need it. But it was so harsh, it was that strict, that they would not allow us to speak Zapotec.)". While it seems that the physical punishment of speaking Zapotec decreased a notch in the 1940s and 1950s, the prohibition of using Zapotec continued. Neither *tía* Natalia or *tío* Gustavo recall an instance at school where they were hit or physically punished for speaking Zapotec; however, they did experience Zapotec language stigmatization and prohibition as they were told by teachers to not use the language. As furthered evidenced by Doña Raquel's comment, "Como iban a la escuela dicen 'pues ya no le hablan [zapoteco]' (Because they went to school they said 'don't speak [Zapotec] to them" and Don Arturo's follow up, "Si pero ya no les toco con varas. A cambio a mí me tocó con vara. (Yes, but they didn't get whippings. But I did get whippings". Don Arturo's comment signals the physical abuse from teachers that characterized this generation's educational experience. These brutal experiences and stories of schooling are not easily forgotten. Don Arturo's and Dona Raquel's anecdote is one of the many stories of Zapotec language prohibition and punishment that was often mentioned by elders. Furthermore, these schooling narratives have also been transmitted to subsequent generations.

During interviews with the adult generation (36-59 years old) regarding their educational experience, which mostly took place from the 1960s-1970s, their responses confirmed that their schooling was strictly in the Spanish language. This was not only due to the fact that if the previous generations were not offered bilingual education, by the time that the adult group went to school some had a novice or fluent Spanish language

knowledge. There are two items that stand out from this generation's experience. First, it seems that the prohibition of Zapotec language use and the punishment began to phase out during the adult generation's educational experience. In a similar situation as the older and younger elders, it seems that older adults who went to school in the 1960s experienced some of the last waves of Zapotec language prohibition and punishment from teachers; such that younger adults, who went to school in the 1970s, were less exposed this negative educational experience. Second, there is an increasing number of adults who describe their upbringing was either in Spanish or Zapotec-Spanish bilingualism. However, there is a multidimensional language repertoire among this group since some self-identify as fluent Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals and others as passive bilinguals, who are fluent in Spanish and understand Zapotec but can't and don't speak it.

I would usually accompany my cousin Janet to help in the *puesto de gelatinas*, but one day it was my younger cousin Estela who was in charge of the stand. On that particular day Don Pablo stopped in front of the *galera*, and as he was getting off his *moto taxi* (motorcycle taxi) Estela whispered to me, "Con el deberías de hablar sobre el Zapoteco, porque siempre me saluda [en Zapoteco] y me hace burla que no le entiendo. (You should talk to him about Zapotec, because he is always greeting me [in Zapotec] and he teases me that I don't understand it)". It was in that same introduction that Don Pablo enthusiastically agreed to give me an interview. I went to his house that is a block from the *aulas* (classrooms), the location of the first school in Tlacochahuaya where much of the education of elders and adults took place. The *aulas* were the physical space where Zapotec language prohibition and stigmatization occurred, and today they house a

public library and cultural center. Don Pablo is a 51 year-old owner and driver of a *moto taxi*, and musician who leads a children's philharmonic band in the *pueblo*. He remembers being raised with the Zapotec language by his Zapotec-Spanish bilingual grandparents, and he learned Spanish at school. When asked about his language fluency he describes that he is fluent in Spanish and knows 90-95% of Zapotec. The quantification of his Zapotec fluency is a based on his experiences of speaking Zapotec with elders who sometimes correct him. He describes his entrance into formal education, "Cuando llegue a la primaria el primer día, me acuerdo que estaba yo llorando porque no podía yo hablar español. El maestro, pues español. Me fui llorando. Me acuerdo que mis abuelos me decían 'Hoy te vas ir a la escuela'. Híjole, empecé a llorar porque no sabía yo español, el castellano. El primer día estuve quietecito, de regreso estaba yo contento. (When I arrived to elementary school on the first day, I remember that I was crying because I couldn't speak Spanish. The teacher, well [only spoke] Spanish. I left crying. I remember that my grandparents would tell me 'today you are going to school'. Man, I began crying because I didn't know Spanish, Castilian. The first day I [sat] still, when I returned [home] I was happy)". While Don Pablo's experience of education on the one hand resembles the feelings of fear and alienation of not knowing Spanish, which elders resonated, one difference was that he does not recall ever being scolded for speaking Zapotec at school. However, he is very well aware of the previous generation's negative schooling experience as he describes, "Mis abuelos decían que los maestros los regañaban a ellos. Que no debían hablar zapoteco. … Que tenían que hablar español a fuerzas. Como le hacían, pero tenían que hablar castellano en la escuela. (My

grandparents said that the teachers would scold them. That they shouldn't speak Zapotec. That they had to speak Spanish by force. How they did it, but they had to speak Spanish at school". Thus, while Don Pablo's elementary education was nonetheless in Spanish, the harsh approach that teachers previously practiced seems to have started to decline in this era. One explanation could be in this generation it seems that there is a greater amount of students who are entering school with some Spanish language knowledge. So while in the past the rule was for all children to not speak Zapotec, it seems that teachers didn't really have to implement this since there were less Zapotec monolingual children entering school, or those who spoke Zapotec also spoke some Spanish.

The opportunity of helping my cousin Janet in her *puesto de gelatinas* was an instrumental and influential part of the fieldwork experience as becoming a familiar face in this space allowed me to build rapport with vendors. Soon after settling in at my *tía* Natalia and *tío* Gustavo's household, I began to meet with Doña Maritza almost on a weekly basis where we would chat about Zapotec revitalization efforts and her own experience with the Zapotec language. Both family members and Doña Maritza made an immediate suggestion that I should talk with Eduardo, a meat vendor who had migrated to California with his wife Francisca and had returned a few years ago with two children- who had participated in the Zapotec tutoring classes. Eduardo is 39 years old and is fluent in Spanish and describes his Zapotec language fluency at 90%. Like Don Pablo, this quantification of Zapotec fluency is individually determined but influenced by other speakers. Eduardo mentioned that there are some Zapotec words that he does not know and elders correct him when he mispronounces or uses the wrong word. He recalls

understanding Zapotec at eight years old, and that since returning to the *pueblo* and working at the market his Zapotec language skills have improved as he takes every opportunity to use it with Zapotec speaking clients. When asked about his educational experience he not only mentions the decline in Zapotec language prohibition but also gives insight into the language shift that has taken place among peers of his generation. Eduardo says, "Nunca mezclaron el zapoteco en la escuela con lo que estudiábamos. Ni en la primaria ni en la secundaria. … No porque como no había compañeros que también lo practicaban. Si lo sabía, yo solo sabía lo que sabía. Pues hasta ahorita casi todos los de mi generación nadie habla zapoteco. (They never mixed Zapotec at school with what we were studying. Neither in elementary or middle school. … No because since there were no classmates that also practiced it. I knew it [Zapotec], only I knew what I knew. Until today almost all within my generation no one speaks Zapotec". While on the one had Eduardo's perspective points to a decline in teacher punishment, he mentions that not many from his generation speak Zapotec, a comment that I was often told. However, his own experience of Zapotec and Spanish language acquisition demonstrate the multiple language acquisition situations that were taking place in this generation- a topic of further discussion and analysis in the next section of this chapter.

I offer another perspective from the adult generation to not only highlight a difference in the educational experience between the adult and elder generation, but also to demonstrate that while the adult and youth generation recall a Spanish schooling both groups are aware of the negative educational experience that the previous generation went through. That is to say, that the elder generations' narrative of Zapotec language

prohibition and stigmatization at school has been transmitted to subsequent generations. This is an important point of analysis because this is the main factor that many community members use to explain and attribute to the decline in language loss. A few days before my March 2013 visit to Tlacochahuaya, the first video of the online Zapotec lesson project was uploaded onto the Bn'Zunni channel- which the details of the project will be discussed in Chapter 3. Through my *tía* Hortencia's efforts I was able to get in touch with one of the leaders of the project, which I also came to learn that we are related as cousins through my grandfather's side. Marcos is a 36 year old Zapotec-Spanish-English trilingual who at the time of the interview lived and worked in telecommunications in Los Angeles, California. The way in which Marcos describes his educational experience demonstrates the change in pedagogical approach but also what I mentioned above, that the subsequent generations are well aware of the elders harsh educational experience. He says, "Nuestra experiencia [educativa] no fue tan fuerte o dramática como se escucha de generaciones anteriores que si les pegaban. Sí, no los dejaban hablar el zapoteco. En el caso nuestro, yo si recuerdo que a los maestros les causábamos risa nada más. No risa de burla, [si no] una gracia de escucharnos hablar en Zapoteco. Los maestros recuerdo, nos preguntaban '¿Que significan eso?' al estar jugando entre nosotros. Nunca llegaron a prohibirnos, nunca llegaron a pegarnos. … Fue muy indiferente su actitud a comparación de las generación anteriores donde si les prohibían y pegaban.(Our [educational] experience was not as harsh or dramatic as its heard from previous generations that they were hit. Yes, they did not let them speak Zapotec. In our case, I do remember that we caused teachers to laugh only. Not a laugh of

making fun, [rather] a grace of hearing us speak Zapotec. The teachers, I remember would ask us 'What does that mean?' when we were playing. They never prohibited [Zapotec], they never hit us. … They were very indifferent with their attitude in comparison with previous generations where they did prohibit and hit". Furthermore, Marcos' own Zapotec and Spanish knowledge and narrative points to the multiple language repertoires of children from his generation and that some children continued to enter school with Zapotec language knowledge and would use it amongst themselves outside the classroom.

The experiences of elders' negative schooling is one that paradoxically has been transmitted to subsequent generations simultaneously as the transmission of the Zapotec language has declined. However, this is the nexus that helps explain and pinpoint one of the most influential factors that has given way to language shift in Tlacochahuaya. Interviews with the youth generation (18-34 years old) demonstrate an awareness of language loss; and while this is the group where many elders say "*donde el zapoteco se esta perdiendo"* (where the Zapotec language is being lost) there continues to be multiple language repertoires among this group. The educational experience of this group has been in the Spanish and there is a greater number who have attained higher levels of education than previous generations. While there is greater Spanish language fluency in this group, youth's Zapotec language knowledge oscillates from being Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals and others who self-report a certain percentage of Zapotec understanding, from a few words to 50%. The quantification of their Zapotec knowledge is gauged by their own perceptions of how much they can understand from a conversation.

Meeting people from my age group in the community proved to be quite difficult as many in this generation were most likely full time workers or students, or full time student workers. My cousin Isabel introduced me to her friends and many kindly accepted to be interviewed. After introducing me to Angel, a 23 year old *campesino* worker and student, we developed a friendship throughout my time in *el pueblo* and realized that we shared similar interests in learning oral histories and traditions of the community. Angel is a dancer in one of the three *Danza de la Pluma* (Feathered Dance) groups in Tlacochahuaya, a dance that originated in the *Valles Centrales* and is predominantly performed by males. Angel describes his language knowledge as fluent in Spanish and while he does not speak it he understands a little bit of Zapotec. While his schooling has been Spanish instructed, he is aware and knows that the elder generation also had Spanish schooling but within his story the stigmatization of Zapotec emerges. Angel describes his mother's educational experience, "Mi mamá cuando ella iba a la primaria, eso es cierto. De que antes como tienen un plan ya la escuelas, pero antes eran un poco más severos. No le daban la prioridad o no te dejaban ser a tus raíces. … Pero si hubo en un tiempo que si, no dejaban hablar zapoteco en las escuelas, tenías que hablar español a fuerzas. Y quizás por ahí se queda esa mentalidad como dices, de que 'No es malo, pues es malo que hable yo zapoteco. Entonces mejor con el español y nada más.' De ahí, pues por ahí deviro en este caso este lapso de tiempo de que se ha cortado de no seguir transmitiendo ese idioma". Angel's comment demonstrates the transmission of this historical experience of elders with discriminatory education, but also mentions the impact of schooling on Zapotec language transmission. His story signals what I have tried

to highlight in this section, which is that the negative schooling experience that started with the elder generation is one of the main factors that lead to a decline in Zapotec language transmission which was manifested through a change in language socialization practices starting with the younger elders (60-79years old) and thus initiating language loss. Furthermore, his comment points to how this experience was internalized. In other words, elders were psychologically and physically traumatized for not only entering school as Zapotec monolinguals. However, this experience has also created a 'superiority vs. inferiority' dichotomy between Spanish and Zapotec. Thus, the pedagogical approach during elders' educational era impacted their experience and influenced many to choose to speak Spanish to their children.

This is an important juncture that helps to explain the beginning of language shift, and is further explained by another member of the youth group. Long before being introduced to Gerardo, he was another person that I was highly recommended to meet to discuss the topic of the Zapotec language. He is a known figure in the community due to the fact that until this day he is the only community member that has studied at the Escuela Normal Bilingüe e Intercultural de Oaxaca (ENBIO), which is located on Tlacochahuaya communal lands and is recognized as the premier institution of bilingual and intercultural teacher training in Oaxaca. Gerardo is a 29 year old Zapotec-Spanish bilingual and a bilingual elementary school teacher in a nearby *pueblo*. The conversation with Gerardo was insightful in both his narrative of his own language acquisition experience but one that also reflects a critical analysis of the elders' schooling. He said,

> Mi infancia fue meramente en español. Porque a mis papas en ese tiempo la escuela tuvo una influencia de que permeaba el asunto de que lo importante era castellanizar. Lo importante era hablar español. Entonces la escuela incluso prohibía hablar el zapoteco. Entonces sé que creo, se infundo, se, se metió esa idea de que al zapoteco no habría que. Es español y es español. Entonces ellos se castellanizaron. Ellos si fueron bilingües casi equilibrados porque si aprendieron el español para hablarlo en la escuela. Pero el zapoteco lo seguían practicando en la casa. Entonces cuando yo pues nazco, crezco era en español, y en español. Y yo rescataba un poco el zapoteco a través del estar oyendo. Pero como todavía permeaba la idea de que el zapoteco. [Perla: ¿Pero lo oías de tus papas?] Si de mis papas, de mis abuelos. Pero no hablaba, solo lo oía. Ósea, y lo entendía, pero no lo hablaba. Empiezo a interesarme en el zapoteco cuando entro a la Normal [ENBIO]. Te estoy hablando de hace 7 años aproximadamente, no. Cuando yo ya me enfoco, no. Cuando yo ya trato, y ya dedico un poco más de, pues esfuerzos al zapoteco. (My childhood was purely in Spanish. Because my parents in that time the school had an influence that permeated the issue that it was important to Hispanicize. The important thing was to speak Spanish. Then the school even prohibited speaking Zapotec. So it was created, it was infuse, the, the idea that Zapotec should not be. It's Spanish and Spanish. Then they became Hispanicized. They were bilingual, almost balanced bilinguals because they learned Spanish to speak it at school. But they kept practicing Zapotec at home. Then when I am born, as I grow up with Spanish, and Spanish. I rescued a little bit of Zapotec through hearing it. But the idea still permeated that Zapotec. [Perla: But you would hear it from your parents?] Yes from my parents, my grandparents. But did not speak it, I would just hear it. And I would understand it, but I did not speak it. I start to get interested in Zapotec when I enter the Normal [ENBIO]. I'm talking about approximately 7 years ago. When I start to focus. When I start to try, and dedicate a little bit more of effort towards Zapotec.)

Gerardo's story not only demonstrates that his upbringing was primarily in Spanish, but it also links the shift from Zapotec to Spanish language socialization with the elders' negative educational experience where the purpose was to have them leave behind Zapotec and integrate into the Mexican nation by becoming Spanish speakers. However, his story also complicates the issue of language loss. Although his upbringing was in Spanish, he was simultaneously exposed to the Zapotec language such that he is able to acquire some Zapotec language understanding but the opportunities for him to further practice it come much later, at the point of entering college. So while there has been a shift from Zapotec to Spanish language socialization, which has been occurring within

the younger elders (60-79 years old) group, the domain of Zapotec seems to be reduced but still has an impact. The impact of post-revolutionary education on Indigenous language use is evident from the narratives shared in this section, and Gerardo's story helps transition to the next section regarding changes in language socialization.

The experiences of elders with the discrimination and denial of using Zapotec in public schools starting in the 1930s, has given rise to changes in language socialization practices since the generation of elders which in turn has contributed a shift to Spanish in Tlacochahuaya. While studies of language shift in nearby towns such as San Lucas Quiaviní (Pérez Báez 2009) and San Juan Guelavía (Falconi 2012) demonstrate a change in language socialization that is more recent and attributed to mass migration of the 1980 and 1990s, the stories from Tlacochahuayuense localize and shed light that a shift to Spanish language socialization and transmission was already underway in the generation of elders (60 years old or older). This correlates with the same time period, around the 1930s, that the Secretaria de Educación Publica (SEP) began to implement rural education throughout Mexico. For many this experience of Zapotec language stigmatization led many elders not to want to pass on Zapotec to their children because they wanted them to avoid the embarrassment and punishment of not knowing Spanish when entering school.

THE BEGINNING OF LANGUAGE SHIFT AND CHANGES IN LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION

Language socialization is important to analyze and focus on because through socialization not only is a linguistic code transmitted, but in the case of Tlacochahuaya

this is how narrative of elders' negative educational experience becomes known to subsequent generations. Through individuals own language socialization experience we see that the transmission of the Zapotec language has been historically and traditionally oral. However, this topic also sheds light on the relation between elders' educational experience and the decision to not directly transmit the Zapotec language to their children. Educational experience influenced language shift such that changes in language socialization practices is where and how language shift in Tlacochahuaya began to occur. Community members who experienced the first wave of education in the 1930s began to use Spanish as the language of socialization for their children, starting in the 1950s, so that upon entering school their children could avoid punishment. However, we also see the complexities of raising children with Spanish when Zapotec maintains a domain in the community during the elders and adults generation, which helps some children in acquiring if not a fluent at least a passive knowledge of Zapotec. Thus, language shift has been occurring for the last four generations such that today children are socialized in Spanish yet the Zapotec language has not ceased from being used, but has declined in transmission. In a situation where teachers were prohibiting and punishing Zapotec language use one would expect that children would cease from learning the language. However, the following narratives from the younger elders demonstrate that when their parents did not directly transmit and socialized them with the Zapotec language, some learned Zapotec through peer socialization and/or through interaction with a close relative that spoke Zapotec. Hence, it seems that the younger elder group is one where there was somewhat of a bilingual balance where Spanish was learned at home and

furthered at school, but Zapotec socialization was provided by peers and/or a relative but not the parents. However, this bilingualism is further reduced with each subsequent generation such that within the adult group there is an increase in passive Zapotec speakers and amongst youth there is a higher percentage of Spanish monolinguals.

As demonstrated in the previous section, many community members from the elder and adult generation had a negative educational experience where Spanish was the language of instruction and the use of the Zapotec language was prohibited and punished. The teachers' message that Spanish should be the language of use and to leave behind Zapotec transcended the classroom such that some amongst the elder generation began to raise their own children with the Spanish language. This change in language socialization practices initiated language loss through a decline in Zapotec language transmission. This was the case with my own family.

My grandfather recalls that my great grandmother, a Zapotec monolingual, raised him and his brothers with the Zapotec language and began to learn Spanish with the two years of primary education that he received. My grandmother was raised in Zapotec by my great-grandfather a Zapotec-Spanish bilingual, and step-grandmother a fluent Zapotec speakers who learned some Spanish through other family members at an older age since she did not attend school. My grandfather along with my grandmother decided to raise their children in Spanish and they prohibited and discouraged their children from learning Zapotec so they could avoid punishment upon entering school. Thus, my mother's first language Spanish but my grandparents would often use Zapotec to communicate with each other and with other Zapotec speakers in the community. As the eldest of my

mother's siblings *tía* Natalia explains their upbringing, "Con el español ya después ya unos 8,10 años fui aprendiendo el Zapoteco. Mejor ya más grande fui aprendido el Zapoteco. Porque los papas no nos dejaban hablar el zapoteco. Pues lo aprendimos en las casa de familiares. … [El español] lo que nos ensañaron lo principal." Thus, upon entering school in the 1950s my mother and her older siblings had Spanish language knowledge. It was a surprise for me to realize that my mother began to speak and use Zapotec around the age of 8 when she went to live with her maternal step-grandmother. It was through these conversations that I realized two things. First, that the generation of my grandparents, what I have described as older elders (80 years and older), is where the majority, if not all, were socialized with the Zapotec language and they learned Spanish at school. Second, while younger elders (60-79 years old) still experienced Zapotec language prohibition at school this is also the time period where we can see that some older elders chose Spanish as the language of childrearing, so as to assuage their children's (younger elders and adults) entrance in school. This is the beginning of language shift as changes in language socialization practices begin to emerge.

Don Arturo and Doña Raquel, who are closer to age to my grandparents, describe that they learned Zapotec orally from their parents. As Don Arturo describes, "Nosotros aprendemos zapoteco desde que nacimos, escuchando. Y ya el castellano, te dijo, en la escuela. Ahí empezamos hablar castellano". Don Arturo's comment also describes the domains that each language had in the 1930s and 1940s where Zapotec was the primary code of socialization and quotidian life, and Spanish was the code of education. However, by the time that this generation begins to have children the domain of Spanish is extended

to the realm of the home. Don Arturo and Doña Rosa are both Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals, and although only Don Arturo had a few years of formal education they raised their children with both the Zapotec and Spanish language. Don Arturo and Doña Raquel describe their reason for starting to teach their children the Spanish language,

> Raquel: Como ya iban a la escuela y ahí ya les dicen "Ya no lo hablan [el zapoteco]"
> Arturo: Ya sabían pues. A veces aquí hablamos castellano con ellos [sus hijos] y ya saben cuándo llegan a la escuela. Pero en cambio nosotros puro zapoteco acá. Llegando a la escuela puro zapoteco hablan todos los compañeritos.
> Raquel: Y ya se enojaban los maestros.
> Arturo: Y el maestro cuando hace su vara así, "Cuidado, eh. Cambien esa palabra. Así vamos hablar." Y así fue, que casi ya mucha gente ya no quiere hablar Zapoteco.

In a context where children are being physically punished for speaking Zapotec, an experience that many elders went through, it is not a surprise to see that they wanted their children to avoid a similar experience. Thus, one of the methods to protect their children from a negative educational experience was to raise them in Spanish so they could communicate with their teacher upon entering school. Even though there is a similar negative schooling experience that is shared among older elders the approach to language socialization differs amongst families. My grandparents prohibited the use and acquisition of Zapotec at home by transmitting directly the Spanish language, whereas Don Arturo and Doña Raquel's story shows that they decided to raise their children with both languages. This raises the following question: though many were punished in school for speaking Zapotec, why and what lead some families to raise their children bilingually in Zapotec and Spanish? This question is one that I have yet to find an answer to as I did not raise it during interviews and emerged after analyzing transcripts in which I noticed

this divergence. Also, to pinpoint an answer to this question would require further in-depth interviews with more of these type of families. Nonetheless, this divergence does not rule out the influence that education had amongts community members which I believe was the main factor that induced a shift from Zapotec to Spanish language socizalition. The narratives of younger elders further highlights how and why this shift begins to take place.

The family case of *tío* Gustavo demonstrates another type of linguistic situation in the home. His paternal family, who were Spanish speakers, arrived to Tlacochahuaya in the 1920s from San Pedro Apostol. His grandfather and father both married women from Tlacochahuaya who were Zapotec speakers, and through these marriages each couple became fluent in Spanish and Zapotec. As *tío* Gustavo explains, "Yo crecí con el español, porque en la casa hablaban puro español. A pesar de que mis papas hablaban el zapoteco. Pero ellos no querían que yo hablara zapoteco. Precisamente lo que dice mi esposa. Decían que si aprendíamos el zapoteco, nos íbamos a enredar con el español y zapoteco. Ya después ni una ni la otra." So while in *tío* Gustavo's family situation a negative education experience is not at the forefront, what we see at play is a language ideology that Zapotec language acquisition interferes with Spanish language fluency. This language ideology, which continues to circulate in the community to this day, along with *tío* Gustavo's family Spanish language fluency, presents a different reason for why he was not raised with the Zapotec language. Nonetheless, we can see that the root of this conception was one generated from teachers and why parents were told to stop transmitting the Zapotec language to children.

Nonetheless, while at home *tío* Gustavo was prohibited from learning or speaking Zapotec his acquisition also demonstrates a different type of socialization that was occurring at this time. *Tío* Gustavo explains, "Yo el zapoteco lo aprendí con mis amigos en la esquina, en el juego, poco a poco fui aprendiendo. ¿Porque? Yo veía en la escuela que al salir al recreo oía que hablaban zapoteco. Pues ahora si aprendí de ellos. Pero mis papás nunca me enseñaron de 'Sabes que aprende el zapoteco, porque necesitas hablar el zapoteco'. Al contrario no podía hablar en la casa. Ni en casa, ni en la escuela. Porque nos pegaban por hablar el zapoteco. Pero yo aprendí, y si ya casi domine aprender todo. Hay partes donde a veces me falla, pero de todos modos si hablo el zapoteco y el español. Toda mi familia puro español, y español. Aunque si hablan el zapoteco, no dejaban que nosotros habláramos el zapoteco. Nunca me enseñaron". While Spanish was the language policy in the home, and *tío* Gustavo went to school during a period where Zapotec continued to be prohibited and punish, this did not stop Zapotec speaking children from using it at school during recess or when interacting with each other.

The memories of another younger elder speak about the resistance and pushback of Zapotec language prohibition that came from children. *Tía* Angelina, an aunt through my grandfather's side, is 61 years old and lives in Los Angeles part of the year and returns to Tlacochahuaya to harvest her fields. She is a Zapotec-Spanish fluent bilingual and who describes her English language fluency as basic. Her childhood perspective also resonates that teachers prohibited Zapotec language use at school; however, "En la hora de recreo es cuando disfrutaban de la libertad, y las niñas y las niños platicaban en Zapoteco. (However at recess time is when they enjoyed liberty, and the girls and boys

would speak in Zapotec)". The stories above once again highlight that Zapotec, although banned in school, maintained a strong domain in the community such that children like *tío* Gustavo, who were socialized with Spanish at home, continued to hear Zapotec in their upbringing and in his case he was able to learn the language through the interactions with his Zapotec speaking peers.

While the socialization experiences of younger elders is one that is not clear cut, through their narratives we begin to see how Spanish begins to enter the home as a code for child bearing and how their own socialization experiences also influence how they raise their children. *Tía* Natalia and *tío* Gustavo describe that they raised their children with the Spanish language. Their two oldest children were born in Mexico City, but they returned to Tlacochahuaya in the 1970s to raise their family and continued to do so in Spanish. They both describe a negative educational experience where the Zapotec language was prohibited and they were both socialized with the Spanish language. Thus, we start seeing that those with a Spanish upbringing transmit the Spanish language to their children. In another case *tía* Angelina, who also experienced negative schooling, was raised with the Zapotec language and decided with her husband to raise her son Marcos in both Zapotec and Spanish. We see then that the decline in Zapotec language transmission is not one that happened within one generation as it is evidenced by the multidimensional language repertoire among the group of adults.

Within the adult generation (35-59 years old) there continues to be a greater number of Zapotec fluent speakers and is also the group where we see an increase in a number of people who state that they understand Zapotec but do not speak it. While there

multiple language socialization experiences amongst adults, where some were raised with only Zapotec or Spanish, or others with both; we can also notice that they begin to socialize their children with in Spanish. Patricio, the son of Doña Raquel and Don Arturo, is a 42 year-old Zapotec-Spanish bilingual *campesino* who has three daughters. Not only does Patricio recall that his parents spoke Spanish to him but also his grandmother would speak to him and his siblings in Spanish. He says, "La mama de mi mama dicen que ellos sufrieron mucho para poder comunicarse con los maestros y no querían que pase uno por lo mismo. Así yo en mi niñez no aprendí el zapoteco, puro en español para que no pasaran lo que pasaron ellos. Cuando llegaron los maestros, no se podían comunicar. Batallaron mucho para aprender el español. … Me case todavía no sabía bien [el Zapoteco], le entendía pero no lo sabía." Although his upbringing is explained by his parents as one with both languages, from Patricio's perspective Spanish was used a lot more and was taught with the purpose to facilitate his and his siblings educational experience. Though Patricio acquired an understanding of the Zapotec language, through his parents' use of both languages at home, he states that he began to practice Zapotec once he temporarily migrated to Los Angeles, California in the late 1990s and lived with other Tlacochahuaya migrants. Nonetheless, his experiences with Spanish language socialization are what also led him to implement a Spanish language upbringing with his daughters. He explains, "Puro español. Porque eso era como lo que crecimos, con el español. Y como los deje 3 años, en ese año aprendieron hablar, a caminar. … Si platicamos cuando llegan visitas en idioma. Y ya que se vayan, empezamos en español." There seems to be a correlation that if one was raised with the Spanish language as a

child, despite exposure to the Zapotec language, as an adult this practice is also implemented with one's own children. In other words, when the Spanish language is the one that is actively transmitted and Zapotec becomes a language that is only heard but not directly taught, this further leads adults to use Spanish with their own children.

While members of the elder and adult generations learned Zapotec at home or in the public domain, they also begin to socialize their own children in Spanish. This results in multiple language repertoires among adults and youth. Even though statistics say that 39% of the community speaks Zapotec (Martínez Hernández 2011), and that the majority of this percentage are adults and elders, there is a third category that is often ignored: those who understand Zapotec but do not speak it. While there is gap in transmission, there is a generation of passive bilinguals that need to be configured as a resource for Zapotec revitalization and maintanence.

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

Another important and imperative domain of analysis is language ideologies because these tend to reveal the views and perceptions of individuals about their language. Furthermore, language ideologies continue to be reproduced through socialization (Riley 2012). While there is awareness amongst community members that the Zapotec language *se esta perdiendo* (is being lost) due to the decline in transmission to children; it is also viewed as a cultural element that should be maintained. This tension that exists between the loss and revitalization of Zapotec can be explained by language

ideologies. These ideologies revealed the tensions that interfere with Zapotec language maintenance and revitalization efforts.

Through informal conversations I became aware of two dominant language ideologies that would often be mentioned, and followed up on these in interviews to get further clarification and details. The belief that learning to speak Zapotec will interfere with one's Spanish acquisition, or as described by *tía* Natalia 'one would get tongue twisted', continues to be relevant. It seems that this belief was perpetrated by teachers during the prohibition of Zapotec language use in school. As *tío* Gustavo and *tía* Natalia demonstrate, "Uno lo creía así. [Por] comentarios. Si aprendes hablar el zapoteco, ya después no vas a saber si hablar español o zapoteco… [Perla: ¿Todavía existe esa idea?]. Gustavo: Ya no. Natalia: Ya no mucho." The ambivalence expressed by the *tío* Gustavo that this ideology no longer exists and *tía* Natalia mentioning that it does not influence as much today; leads me to belief that it has not been dismantled. Another perspective comes from Patricio, as he explains that trying to learn both languages produced passive speakers of both languages, "Por eso hubo muchos cuatreros.¿ Sabes cuál es el cuatrero? No, pues el que habla muy poquito de idioma, el zapoteco y el español. Lo mezclan, es un cuatro." Through this ideology we can further understand why the direct transmission of Zapotec continues to further decline and how they interfere in considering a bilingual upbringing for children.

A language ideology that devalues the utility of the Zapotec languages is the one that is tied to socioeconomic mobility. The ideology is that that learning Zapotec is 'useless' since it doesn't help to obtain a job. *Tía* Rosa, a Zapotec-Spanish bilingual older

adult who lives in California, mentioned that she learned to speak Zapotec at the age of eight through her peers and with her *tía* Carla who was a Zapotec monolingual. It was not until her late teens that she revealed to my grandmother that she could understand and speak Zapotec. My grandmother was upset that she knew Zapotec and told her to stop speaking it because Spanish is what would help her get a better paying job in Oaxaca City, not Zapotec. In a similar way *tío* Gustavo explains how Spanish was and is viewed as the tool for upward mobility, "Es mas hasta los papas decían 'No queremos que hablen zapoteco, puro español porque va para arriba'". This demonstrates the language rankings in which the Spanish language is placed at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy, whereas the Zapotec language is at the bottom. As further explained by Patricio, "Para un trabajo no es necesario saber el zapoteco. Con que sepas hablar el español." The Zapotec language then is devalued for the job market, and with language shift already occurring it also loses ground in the home domain. Thus, the utility of Zapotec outside the community and inside the home is seemed to have been displaced by Spanish.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have made the argument that a language shift from Zapotec to Spanish was influenced by negative schooling experiences which prohibited and punished Zapotec language use in the classroom. The education implemented in Tlacochahuaya during the 1930s, was one that was ideologically tied to the nation building project of the post-revolutionary Mexican state goals of *castellanización* and modernization. Many who had this experienced, once they had families began to

socialize and raise their children with Spanish so they could avoid punishment. However, many of those who are today younger elders (60-79 years old) and Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals, recall an upbringing in Spanish but acquired the Zapotec language through socialization with peers and/or with a Zapotec monolingual relative. Some children resisted and pushed back on Zapotec language prohibition both at home and school. However, other community members, who share the negative schooling experience, raised their children with both Zapotec and Spanish. This has caused a gradual language shift from Zapotec to Spanish over the course of four generations, in which the Zapotec domain is reduced with every generation. As a result, there is a multiple language repertoire within the adult and youth generation which includes Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals, fluent Spanish speakers with passive Zapotec language knowledge, and Spanish monolinguals.

Language shift from Zapotec to Spanish has given way to a decline in Zapotec language transmission. However, through Spanish socialization the narratives of elders and adults negative schooling experiences have been transmitted. In other words, adults and youths are aware that older generations were punished at school for speaking Zapotec. Simultaneously the language ideologies that are circulated in the community continue to devalue the acquisition and utility of the Zapotec language. The belief that Zapotec language acquisition interferes with Spanish language acquisition, and that Zapotec has no utility for socioeconomic mobility further sustains and expands Spanish language socialization. This chapter serves to understand what influenced a language shift from Spanish to Zapotec and how this was evoked through Spanish language

socialization which began in the younger elder group (60-79 years old). In following chapter I discuss the language revitalization efforts that have emerged in the home and migrant community.

Chapter 3: *Recuperando Nuestro Idioma*: Language Revitalization Efforts in the Home and Migrant Community

The field of language documentation has experienced a discourse shift from language maintenance to revitalization because to, "save a language is to train new speakers" (Hinton 2003). While much of the language revitalization literature and projects have focused on the home community, the situation in the Americas calls our attention to consider a wider lens. We are in an era where globally people are migrating due to violence and lack of opportunities to sustain a livelihood in their home communities. Latin American migration to the United States has been occurring at least since the 1900s. However, in the last 30 years there has been an increasing flow of indigenous peoples from Latin America migrating to the global north. The 2000 and 2010 U.S. census demonstrates that the number of indigenous Latin American migrants to the United States continues to increase (Huizar Murillo and Cerda 2004; Viñas-de-Puig 2013). The increase in indigenous migration to the U.S has been caused by violence, as evidenced by the Mayan diaspora that fled the brutal Guatemalan Civil War (French 2010; Gladwin 2004), and/or lack of economic opportunities in home communities, as has often been the factor of Oaxacan migration (Cohen 2010; Stephen 2007). Thus, we have situations where indigenous languages from Latin America, where some are spoken by millions of speakers others by a few hundred or dozen people, are coming into language domains where English is the national language and Spanish serves as the communicative tool with other Latinos. For some communities that have been engaged in migration for decades, the population is often times divided between the home

community and migrant groups in single or multiple localities in the United States. There are cases where indigenous language speaker bases have declined in the home community due to migration and they are spread out among the diaspora. There is a need to further consider transnational language revitalization efforts for indigenous languages where the home community has experienced out-migration and has community members in other nations.

The language choices of the migrant diaspora are at times affecting and impacting the home communities (Pérez Báez 2013). With indigenous peoples migrating and increasingly settling in the United States, often times with their indigenous languages already in an uneven relation with Spanish in the home community, how are indigenous languages being maintained, and how will they continue to be in the future? Can we consider or propose transnational language revitalization efforts? This is not an easy task or approach; as we have seen with previous language revitalization literature that this is already a complicated task when we focus just in the home community. However, as some community members and linguists have pointed out, the maintenance of the language is also in the hands of the diaspora (Viñas-de-Puig 2013; Guidi 8/8/13). In the following sections I will provide a brief summary of the most impactful and widely circulated language revitalization literature to highlight some emerging best practices. This will be followed by a section of cases studies of migrant indigenous languages to analyze what is occurring in the home communities and among migrant diaspora. In the third section I build a case for transnational language revitalization for Zapotec of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya. In the final section I discuss and propose some suggestions to

begin thinking of what it would mean and how we can sustain a transnational indigenous language that is endangered.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION LITERATURE

In response to the global language crisis, for the last 20 years the field of linguistics has reoriented its priorities to language documentation and "a second response to language endangerment has been increasing work in language revitalization, a term that refers to any activity 'attempting to bring back endangered languages to some level of use within their communities'" (Gennetti and Siemens 60). Within language documentation the task is to collect and document as much information as possible about the existing language, a task which is often broken up into topics of grammar, dictionary, and textual documentation, whereas language revitalization projects are oriented towards diagnosing the factors of language shift and developing practices that will lead to the community's determined goal of language vitality. Thus, within the field of linguistics the response to endangered languages emerged through documentary and revitalization linguistics. However, much of the approach has been focused on the hometown of these groups. One aspect that is missing is addressing the maintenance and revitalization of indigenous languages, which due to migration, have been brought into other domains.

Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale's *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (2001) is a collection of indigenous language revitalization projects that cover a wide gamut of approaches that include literacy, media and technology, immersion, and training. The methods and projects that are highlighted are predominately ones from

North America. Hinton and Hale acknowledge that other languages currently present in the U.S. are also subject to language shift and state the following:

> some languages may be spoken primarily by immigrants who are refuges from genocide, and their languages may be endangered or even extinct in their original homelands. But there is one important difference between most immigrant languages and indigenous languages: in most cases, the immigrants' heritage languages are still strong on the old country. (3)

While indigenous people are increasingly migrating there is a misconception that homogenizes the languages brought by migrants as ones that enjoy prestige back in the home nation. Indigenous people from Latin American increasingly continue to bring with them to the U.S. their culture, traditions, and language. It should also be mentioned that there are various language repertoires among indigenous migrants as some make the journey with bilingual fluency (i.e. a national and indigenous language) but also many come as monolingual or with no fluency in an indigenous language. Nonetheless, this situation begs the question: what happens when immigrant indigenous languages[6], endangered or not in the home community, are introduced into a new domain, particularly that of the United States? I highlight this to begin proposing that in doing language revitalization we also need to consider indigenous languages whose speaker base is no longer tightly sustained in the home community. While these languages are indigenous to the Americas, they are migrating with speakers into the U.S. where English is the dominant language, Spanish is the lingua franca used among many Latinos, and they are also sharing space with other indigenous languages.

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[6] Term used by Ricard Viñas-de-Puig (2013) to described indigenous languages from the Americas that have migrated with their speakers to the United States.

The importance and contributions of Hinton and Hale's work is the clear explanation that language revitalization, "refers to the development of programs that result in re-establishing a language which has ceased being the language of communication in the speech community and bringing it back into full use in all walks of life" (5). Furthermore, they reiterate Fishman's point that an important aspect in community level language revitalization is that before implementation there needs to be an assessment of language resources and vitality when planning the project. They advocate for grass roots assessment and approach to language revitalization, because while institutional support would enhance these efforts most speech communities will need to develop their own strategies to revitalize the language. As they explain, "It is only if an indigenous speech community itself desires and initiates efforts toward language survival that such programs should exist or would have any chance of success" (Hinton and Hale 5). In a transnational context it would also be useful to expand the concept of speech community to include migrants because they do not cease to speak the language; rather there is a decline in intergenerational transmission (Gladwin 2004). I believe that their work empowers communities to approach language revitalization with room to expand on concepts based on each case.

Another important theoretical and methodological publication on the topic is Lenore Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley's 2006 publication titled *Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization*. This is an accessible handbook that helps in approaching and developing language revitalization projects. Grenoble and Whaley emphasize, through various examples across the world, the need to determine realistic

goals for a language revitalization project and the need to carefully determine the type of approach whether it be oral and/or through literacy. They also highlight the importance of knowing the current flows of transmission as they explain, "The dynamics of intergenerational transmission are perhaps more important to understand than any other relevant factor in assessing the need for language revitalization" (Grenoble and Whaley: 6). This signals the advantage of having speakers of the language so as to train new speakers and extend the domain where it is employed (Grenoble and Whaley, 2006: 13). However, one of the resources that seem to be overlooked is that of speakers in the diaspora and their potential role in language revitalization and maintenance. Grenoble and Whaley state:

> we are concerned in the present with the endangerment and revitalization of indigenous languages as opposed to immigrant languages. Speakers of the latter may also be undergoing language shift, but immigrant languages typically have a speaker base outside of the immigrant territory. By indigenous, however, we refer to languages firmly planted in a particular geography before the age of European colonization. (14)

In the United States we have a situation in which languages that are indigenous to the Americas are migrating with their speakers and crossing nation state borders. What is missed is that indigenous languages are becoming immigrant languages that enter a context of double threat: endangerment in home community and amongst the diaspora. Even though they mention that, "Speakers are not just an important sign of the language's vitality; they are critical for teaching the language and for helping create new domains for its use" (Grenoble and Whaley: 41); the analysis of the potential role and impact of indigenous language speakers in the migrant group is left out. However, they do point to

another important aspect, which is that language ideologies and use need to be assessed and aligned for language revitalization efforts to be fruitful. Just as language travels with migrants so do ideologies and socialization practices. These will also need to be considered when proposing and developing transnational language revitalization.

While the theoretical literature of language revitalization considers the macro and micro factors that cause language shift and propose various methods of revitalization based on the community's individual situation, what is overlooked is the reality that indigenous languages, especially from Latin American regions, are migrating with their speakers. As Viñas-de-Puig mentions, "most of this methodological research has dealt with efforts carried out in the preservation and documentation of languages in the original communities where the languages are used, but very little, if any, attention has been paid to the promotion of immigrant languages in the US (and elsewhere)" (158). It is interesting that the language revitalization literature has not yet addressed the increasing number and presence of indigenous languages in the diaspora, and in the following section I review a few cases that further demonstrate the need to widen our lens in language revitalization efforts.

CASE STUDIES

The following case studies demonstrate there is a two-way influence between the actions of the home community and migrant groups. Three studies on Oaxacan communities will be highlighted along with the efforts of indigenous language

maintenance in the east coast of the United States and the transnational Garifuna revitalization project.

Gabriela Pérez Báez in her 2009 dissertation makes the case that the migrant diaspora of San Lucas Quiaviní in Los Angeles, CA is influencing a language shift to Spanish in the home community. Her study demonstrates that, although, San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec (SLQZ) is a highly spoken language in the community and has an extensive dictionary; high rates of migration to the United States are directly influencing a language shift to Spanish and loss of Zapotec language transfer to future generations. This is due to the low rate of language transfer to children in the United States and to the fact that those children who return to the community, permanently or temporarily, influence Zapotec speakers to accommodate to them linguistically by speaking Spanish. This shows the importance and also the complexities of looking into language shift from a transnational perspective. Pérez Báez elaborates and looks at the family language policy practiced in Los Angeles to demonstrate how this is one of the realms that is contributing to language shift in the home community. She explains, "First, the community is shifting primarily to Spanish in California where Spanish is widely spoken and also heavily stigmatized. … Second, the language shift patterns in the Los Angeles community are being *exported*, so to speak, to San Lucas Quiaviní, given the close ties it maintains with the home community"(2014: 75). Thus, the language choices of migrants are inducing a language shift in the home community such that Pérez Báez labels San Lucas Quiaviní Zapotec as an endangered transnational language. Furthermore, she also makes the case that language revitalization will need to emerge from community interests because "given

that scenarios comparable to that of SLQ are ubiquitous across communities of speakers of endangered languages in Mesoamerica, models of language planning and language shift reversal ought to be independent of standardization and institutional support" (2005: 92). Pérez Báez's study of SLQZ is groundbreaking for literature on language endangerment and shift because it highlights the role that the migrant community plays. Her research is part of the emerging literature that I believe begs our attention of seriously considering linking language revitalization efforts across nation borders.

Elizabeth Falconi's 2011 dissertation describes the situation of San Juan Guelavía (SJG), which is a neighboring community of San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya. San Juan Guelavía is a community, with a migrant diaspora in the United States, where language shift from Zapotec to Spanish is underway. In the community Zapotec and Spanish have been mapped on two opposing domains of ancient and modern. This is furthered upheld by the language discrimination that many elders faced in public education and as a consequence this traumatic experience has been influencing a shift away from Zapotec as the main language in child socialization. Simultaneously, there exists a language revitalization project in Guelavía that aims to revalorize indigenous cultural and linguistic practices through narratives of the transnational relation between the town and diaspora in the United States. San Juan Guelavía and San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya are not only neighboring towns, but also share migrant and Zapotec language similarities. Falconi highlights the community based revitalization project that is using the storytelling genre, historically a register used by elders, to encourage Zapotec language acquisition and use among youth (2013: 626). As she explains, "These challenges have inspired the creation

of multiple ways to 'speak the past' into a present rife with the tensions, contradictions, and transformations that define life in an indigenous transborder community" (2013: 633). This case demonstrates the transnational links between the home community and diaspora, which highlights the potential of considering a transnational approach to Zapotec revitalization.

Deborah Augsburger's 2004 study on "Language socialization and shift in an Isthmus community of México" is groundbreaking work on Zapotec language socialization in the town of Juchitán. Zapotec language from the Isthmus has enjoyed prestige for a long time; however, the language acquisition beliefs are contradicting parents' bilingual goals and contributing to Spanish language shift. Zapotec is seen as the language of ethnic identity and community membership, and Spanish as the language of socioeconomic opportunity. However, the community language ideology dictates that Zapotec language acquisition comes naturally and that learning Spanish requires an effort from parents. This results in a conscious and active effort in socializing children in Spanish. Augsburger concludes, "In many ways the practices of language socialization in the two neighborhoods undercut well-intended parental strategies for navigating their children towards a bilingualism that can balance maintaining identity and enhancing opportunity" (249). This is a groundbreaking study precisely because Isthmus Zapotec is known throughout Oaxaca to be a language with high prestige, but also there is a need for dismantling language ideologies which are undermining language maintenance and revitalization.

Ricard Viñas-de-Puig makes the argument for Participatory Action Research (PAC) for language revitalization of Tzotzil, a Mayan language of Chiapas, Mexico, and Hñähñu (or Otomí), an Otomanguean language group of the Central Mexican highlands, in eastern North Carolina. His case study is very insightful of the environment in which these two indigenous Latin American languages find themselves in the migrant diaspora. He explains, "Although the immigrants who are L1 speakers of an immigrant indigenous language value it as an important part of their identity, the social, economic, and cultural environment disfavor their using the language and passing it to the children" (161). The decline of indigenous language transmission is no surprise as the previous two case studies have highlighted and in the case of these two languages their status in the home community is one of high vitality. This unique case study documents the process of language revitalization efforts among the migrant diaspora. This came about when members from the speaking community contacted researchers to conduct work on the Tzotzil language which then motivated linguists working on the Tzotzil project to contact Hñähñu speakers (Ricard Viñas-de-Puig:167). The goals of both projects, which have been developed in collaboration between linguists and community members, are not only to document the language but to produce materials that could be used by the community. This shows the resourcefulness of migrant indigenous language speakers in reaching out to researchers and linguists that could share language revitalization practices. This of course takes time and energy from community members but it is a possibility. Viñas-de-Puig also argues for attention on indigenous migrant languages as he explains, "Mesoamerican languages are part of the linguistic landscape of Hispanic immigrant

populations, although their precarious sociolinguistic situation (with extremely little use of these language outside the home and no continued use of the language in younger generations) makes evident the need to document and strengthen their language in immigrant settings" (172). The presence of indigenous languages from Latin America in the United States can no longer be overlooked and need to be considered in language revitalization efforts and literature.

The case of the Garifuna language, an Arawak language with Carib admixture centered in Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize, provides an example of transnational efforts for language revitalization. As Geneva Langworthy explains, "Language revitalization efforts in the Garifuna Nation are complicated by the fact that the Garifuna community spans Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize, St. Vincent, and also the United States" (41). Dealing with language endangerment in one location is already a challenge in itself but the transnational revitalization of Garifuna language has been approached by the community with a language policy that deals with the various sociolinguistic differences that each location confronts. Langworthy explains that planning of language revitalization projects where due to the formation of the Central American Black Organization (CABO) and the creation of a Garifuna Web site and e-mail list: Garifuna-World and GarifunaLink" (44). While these have been useful tools for these efforts among the transnational speech community, one of the pitfalls is access to communication by groups with less economic resources. One of the elements that will also challenge transnational language revitalization is access to economic resources. While the reason for migration could be economic, displacement by violence, or by

personal choice, the focus of migrants is is to sustain a livelihood. Nonetheless, when planning transnational language revitalization a discussion on social capital and economic resources will need to be a priority as migrant groups could access various resources (i.e. academic contacts such as demonstrated in the Viñas-de-Puig case study). The inspiration of the Garifuna efforts comes from the fact that, "transnational language policies are not created by nation-states but by language communities that transcend borders. The Garifuna language community exemplifies exactly this type of transnational endangered language community" (Ravindranath: 62).

Language revitalization is up against many odds even when it is planned in the home community. However, this should not deter us from empowering indigenous migrant communities to consider transnational language revitalization. Whether indigenous migrants are living permanently or temporarily in the United States, we see that the status of indigenous languages is precarious within the diaspora and/or also in the home community. We can no longer overlook the indigenous language speaker groups that are throughout the United States. In the following section I highlight the language revitalization projects that have been developed for San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya Zapotec and support a transnational language revitalization approach for this community.

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION OF SAN JERÓNIMO TLACOCHAHUAYA ZAPOTEC

Two language revitalization projects have emerged with the goal of maintaining the Tlacochahuaya Zapotec language by transmitting the language to children and garnering novice speakers. Zapotec language tutoring classes for children emerged after a

conversation between the *autoridad* (local government) and a teacher from the Escuela Normal Bilingüe e Intercultural de Oaxaca (ENBIO), the training institute for bilingual teachers in Oaxaca, to address language decline in the town where the institute is located on communal lands. María Mercedes Morales is a younger elder, bilingual Zapotec-Spanish speaker who is now a retired elementary school teacher and who was selected to lead the project because of her teaching and language experience. From María's perspective, it was the combination of the impulse from actors of ENBIO and CEDELIO (Centro de Estudios y Desarrollo de las Lenguas Indigenas de Oaxaca- whose headquarters are also located in Tlacochahuaya) and a political crisis in 2009 that allowed the project to take off. As María comments, "This was an opportunity for the *autoridad* to demonstrate that they were doing something good for the community". Thus, at the beginning of the project there was some institutional and municipal support and encouragement.

When María started the project she was surprised and challenged with the difficulty of recruiting children for the tutoring lessons. When she had a group of 20 children, she offered two-hour tutoring lessons twice a week in the afternoon. María also visited the homes of the children who lived with Zapotec speakers and urged them to help with the efforts. She told them, "Now that I started them off and have their interest for the language, support them. Speak to them in Zapotec at home so they won't forget what they learned". In late 2010 she was selected as a member of the Electoral Committee the group responsible for selecting community members for the 2013 municipal elections. Unfortunately, this turned out to be detrimental for the tutoring lessons as she was given

more tasks through the committee along with existing personal and familial duties. She attempted to seek a replacement that could lead the project but was unable to find someone. In mid-2012 she announced to the students that the tutoring lessons would be paused until she finished her position with the Electoral Committee in 2013. For María this was a hard choice because of the time and energy that it took to get the children invested in the classes. On her last class she made sure to tell the students that this was only momentarily and that they needed to continue practicing the language. She encouraged them to seek the help of Zapotec speaking elders.

While one project was put on hold, another language revitalization project for Zapotec is being developed in southern California through the efforts of two members of the Tlacochahuaya migrant group. Towards the end of my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to interview Moises García Guzman when he was in town to attend a linguistic workshop at the Centro Académico y Cultural San Pablo in Oaxaca City. He recalls Zapotec as his first language, one that was taught by his parents and grandparents, he learned Spanish in grade school, and learned English in Oaxaca during his undergraduate studies. In 2000 he migrated with his mother to Los Angeles, California to join his father.

Since 2007, Moises has been uploading videos of music, dances, and history from Tlacochahuaya onto the YouTube channel titled BnZunni, the Zapotec word for Tlacochahuaya. It was through the comments section of the BnZunni channel that the suggestion for online Zapotec language lessons emerged. This also contributed to existing conversations among migrant members as to how to do something regarding the language

loss that they saw unfolding both in Los Angeles and Tlacochahuaya. In collaboration with Edgar Angeles Angeles the project of "Rescate Oral del Zapoteco de Tlacochahuaya"[7] came online in March 2013. The title for the project comes from the use of oral transmission in developing the lessons. The lessons are taught in Spanish and Zapotec and range from 15-25 minutes where vocabulary is reviewed. Moises predicts that this will be a 2-year project with the goal of first building the audience's vocabulary before learning the grammar and structure of the language. Moises and Edgar reference and use the vocabulary that was documented in Fray Juan de Córdoba's 1578 text *Arte del idioma zapoteco* to build the online lessons. For Moises, "The internet is a tool that can and should be used for cultural maintenance and diffusion". As the project is developing and going into its second year, the impact and use of these online lessons is to be seen and analyzed. To date there has not been a survey of the audience, but they do plan to seek this information in upcoming months.

IDENTITY: BETWEEN TLACOCHAHUAYUENSE AND ZAPOTEC

In interviews and conversations the link between the Zapotec language and identity emerged, which is the topic of the following section. Even though, Zapotec language transmission has declined, other cultural elements have been maintained and adaptive to changing times. Today the community is aware of this language loss and the need to maintain the language is considered a crucial element to claim a Zapotec identity in Tlacochahuaya. As Stephen explains, "ethnic identity in Oaxaca has been constituted

[7] Videos available at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxCSqu2skyFjYYv6qbqXV9w

not at a regional level- as 'Zapotec', for example- but at a much more localized, even community level" (2005: 27).

Community members that were interviewed stated that maintaining the Zapotec language is the element that makes Tlacochahuaya different to surrounding communities and completes Zapotec identity. Tlacochahuaya is described today as a Zapotec community because of traditions and customs although there is Zapotec language loss. One can claim Tlacochahuayuense identity by being born in the community, participating in social interactions, and ancestry. Simultaneously, at the individual level the claim to Zapotecness is limited only to those who speak the language. Thus, there exist a flexible local Tlacochahuayuense identity that recognizes Zapotec ancestry, but speaking Zapotec allows for a complete claim to Zapotecness. This tension was highlighted by *tía* Angelina an elder (60 years or older) who explains, "[Era] necesario que mi hijo aprendiera Zapoteco, su lengua nativa. Inculcar que no se avergonzara de eso porque él tiene que identificarse de que es de un pueblo Zapoteca." Here we see the definition of Tlacochahuaya as a Zapotec community because of its language; however, not knowing Zapotec does not exclude one from the local identity. *Tía* Angelina says, "Uno que nace acá, aunque no sepa el idioma [Zapoteco] es de Tlacochahuaya". This view is also shared by Angel, a youth, about non-Zapotec speakers, "Pues este, pues podrían seguir siendo por el hecho de nacer aca, por ser de aca, vivir aca pero solamente lo serian, no serian uno completo si no hablara Zapoteco si no se supiera la historia o porque es Tlacochahuaya. … Seguirían siendo Tlacochahuayuense pero no sería uno completo". This illuminates how internally Tlacochahuaya identity encompasses a

Zapotec ancestry; however, Zapotec identity is incomplete without the language. I believe that this elucidates the possible internalization and reproduction of the Mexican state's process of defining Indigenous people through language. Rather than viewing Zapotec language as an element that complements Tlacochahuayuense Zapotec identity, these two categories of identity are at tension with each other because Zapotec ancestry is claimed through a local, collective Tlacochahuayuense identity but it is also understood that speaking the language completes one's claim to being Zapotec. The desire to maintain the language not only serves internal purposes for identity formation, but also the element of difference.

The Tlacochahuaya Zapotec[8] language serves as a marker that allows to claim a difference from neighboring towns and nearby Oaxaca City. Patricio explains that if the Zapotec language was no longer reproduce then Tlacochahuaya would no longer be recognized as an independent town but rather as an extension of Oaxaca City. Thus, the Zapotec language serves to difference Tlacochahuaya from the encroachment of the urban city and supports the community's autonomy. Don Pablo expressed a similar sentiment in regards to the Zapotec language being lost, "Porque Tlaco, ya no seria Tlaco. Tlaco como en Zapoteco se dice BnZunni. Y ya no seria BnZunni. … seria solamente como una colonia de Oaxaca. [Una] parte de Oaxaca [son] las colonias [de] castellano". This demonstrates that community members view language as the element of difference and uniqueness that makes Tlacochahuaya and can be sustained through the

[8] The Zapotec language family is comprised of various dialects or variants. Thus, many times neighboring Zapotec communities speak mutually unintelligible variants.

language. Thus, maintaining the Zapotec language allows Tlacochahuayuenses to externally express a difference and internally sustain an ethnic boundary. In asking my tío Gustavo the link between the language and Zapotec identity he explained that one can't claim to be Zapotec unless you speak it. He also explains that language demonstrates to others a distinction, "Se distingue que soy de Tlacochahuaya, porque luego, luego me dijeron al hablar Zapoteco pues por lógica es de Tlacochahuaya". The language allows for one to claim being a Zapotec from Tlacochahuaya and for others to identify one from this particular community. The two language activists of the community that I was able to work and converse with reflect this view of the role of language as one that completes the community's identity. María explains that with the decline of Zapotec language transmission, "Se está perdiendo la identidad, primero". Likewise, Moises explains the role of language maintanence as the following, "Puede jugar un factor mucho más determinante en ser de Tlacochahuaya en hablar el Zapoteco de Tlacochahuaya porque entonces ya tendría una identidad cultural, quiero atrever a decir, completa del pueblo". The issue that I perceive in language revitalization is not in using the language as a differential and ethnic marker, but rather perceiving it as one that completes or authenticates a claim to Zapotecness.

For community members that that were interviewed, Zapotec language vitality is important because it completes Zapotec identity and is described as an element that differentiates Tlacochahuaya from other Zapotec communities in the Central Valley. There continues to be a reproduction of the Mexican state's notion of using indigenous language as a marker of indigenous identity. The education of 1930s that was imposed in

Tlacochahuaya influenced a language shift to Spanish, and while Zapotec language transmission has been declining the community continues to collectively claim and recognize Zapotec ancestry through the traditions that it has maintained. However, if speaking the language is perceived as the one element that is missing and required for claiming Zapotecness, then what occurs with surrounding communities that also identify as Zapotec but don't maintain the language? As Tiffany Lee argues, "[we should] reclaim Native languages by sparking a critical Indigenous consciousness important for language revitalization efforts. … I define critical Indigenous consciousness as an awareness of the historical and broad oppressive conditions that have influenced current realities of Indigenous people's lives" (318). While I support my maternal community's efforts for revitalizing the Zapotec language, I also hope that within this process we seek to expand on the meaning of being Zapotec that transcends language as a marker. In other words, my concern is that while Tlacochahuaya seeks to maintain language for identity and differencing purposes that we do not reproduce colonial notions that in the first place have been so violent and detrimental for Indigenous identities. As explained by *tío* Gustavo, "El pueblo no deja de ser zapoteco por no hablarlo. Pero el idioma fortalece la identidad y cultura". I suggest then that we seek to maintain our Zapotec language so as to complement our community's culture and as a way to for us to resist the colonial legacy that has sought to erase indigenous identities. This resistance requires recognizing that claims to indigenous identities are a complex process informed by historical conditions, and language is one but not the only element of Indigeneity.

CHALLENGES TO LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

Some of the challenges facing these projects are the lack of communication and planning input across the community. For example, the tutoring classes for children skipped the recommendations of Grenoble and Whaley in solidifying a language plan and project goals. In interviews and conversations, some people mentioned being aware of the project while others were unaware and said that that nothing was being done to rescue the language. However, even the small number of students that did attend indicates that while there is awareness of language loss, commitment to participate in the efforts is low. Further hampering these efforts is the continued experience of discrimination based on indigenous language use and demeaning indigenous languages as dialects both in Mexico and the locations where migrant groups reside. As reported by Carmen Sesín "many indigenous speakers are subjected to ridicule by Spanish speaking Latinos in the U.S. – something they constantly faced in their own countries" (3/19/14). This is yet another challenge and factor that contributes to indigenous language decline as this situation does not encourage language transmission to children. There needs to be a process of healing and discussion surrounding the stigmatization of language, and one where indigenous language speakers feel empowered to challenge these negative notions. The Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de Córdova in Oaxaca City has begun a campaign called "Todas Se Llaman Lenguas"[9] (They All Are Called Languages) so as to challenge the view of indigenous languages as dialects. Thus, raising consciousness that indigenous languages

[9] More information on the campaign can be found on the website: http://www.todas-lenguas.mx/.

are valuable ancestral inheritances to be maintained is important and necessary part of language revitalization efforts.

Language ideologies, such as the view that Zapotec language acquisition will complicate Spanish language knowledge, need to be demystified in the home community and diaspora. Amongst migrants, that left with a memory of language shift taking place, the view that there is no interest for the language even in the home community needs to be reconfigured because interest in Zapotec language revitalization is emerging. Most importantly, a community-wide discussion, including the migrant diaspora, about the goals of language revitalization is very much needed to garner support, ideas, and promote language revitalization in multiple locals.

With the online tutoring lessons, although this allows for learning at one's own pace, currently the audience is unknown. The children of migrants, who might not speak Spanish, are excluded from this opportunity. My own research is limited by the fact that it was solely conducted in SJT, and further research needs to be conducted in Los Angeles and Santa Ana, California where a critical mass of Tlacochahuayans resided to understand the linguistic repertoire and the level of interest in revitalization efforts among the diaspora. Nonetheless, this online project also has the potential of being used by youth and adults in Tlacochahuaya. One suggestion is a partnership between Moises and one of his cousins who owns an internet café in Tlacochahuaya who could offer free internet access to view the lessons.

Transnational language revitalization is important to consider because as the SJT case demonstrates, Zapotec language transmission to children is neither occurring in the

home community or among the diaspora. However, the likelihood of Zapotec language transmission among the diaspora is even lower. As Pamela Munro explains, “The majority of Valley Zapotec immigrants do not pass on full command of their language to children born in the United States. These parents have observed that while Spanish and English are necessary tools for them to get ahead in the US, Zapotec is not, so they are often reluctant to encourage their children to learn this third language” (4). The need for transnational language revitalization is urgent in the cases where there are more community members in the diaspora than in the hometown. For example, the hopes of maintaining and revitalizing the Zapotec language of San Bartolome Zoogocho depend on the diaspora, as expressed by Odilia Romero, director of the LA-based Binational Organization of Indigenous Communities, "If the language was to be rescued, it would be here in LA. But if we don't do anything about it, by 2050, it'll be gone” (Guidi 8/8/13).

In the case of Tlacochahuaya, interviewees expressed a desire to maintain the language because it is an element that allows for Tlacochahuaya to distinguish itself from surrounding communities and Oaxaca City. Likewise, the Zapotec language strengthens and complements the community’s indigenous identity. Among the diaspora, I would highly assume that a similar sentiment exists of maintaining the Zapotec language to strengthen the ties with the home community. Currently there is a male youth dance group, named BNZUNNi NI R'YA, in Los Angeles that practices “La Danza de la Pluma” (the Feathered Dance) which is another cultural marker of Tlacochahuaya. This demonstrates the interest of maintaining cultural ties with Tlacochahuaya. It is through these spaces in the diaspora and home community where an interest and empowerment

for learning the language can also be raised among youth. Likewise we need to take advantage of the fact that there are elders and adults who speak the language both in the home community and diaspora. In the home community language nests for children would be ideal and the latest news that I heard is that some pre-schools in Tlacochahuaya are beginning to teach the Zapotec language. For youth and adults, a language immersion approach such as the Master-Apprentice program developed by Leanne Hinton would allow for elders to transmit the Zapotec language alongside cultural practices (Hinton 2002).

The biggest obstacles and limitations to revitalization in the home community and diaspora is the socioeconomic situation where long work shifts decrease the amount of time available to engage in these efforts. In SJT many people work in Oaxaca City for 10-12 hours shifts plus the bus commute is about one hour each way. The language domain in the community and Oaxaca City, where many go to work and school, is Spanish. In the U.S., most jobs in the service and agriculture sector replicate a similar work situation (Sánchez Gómez and Barceló Quintal 2011). As Munro explains, "It is only as people gain a foothold in society that they find the leisure to worry about the potential loss of their culture and language" (5). Furthermore, migrants carry with them language stigmatization experiences that fuel the challenge of maintaining Spanish fluency among their children in an English domain. However, the two language revitalization projects that have emerged attempting to maintain San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya Zapotec language demonstrate that there is interest for the language in the

home community and among the diaspora. The indigenous migrant diaspora can and should contribute to the efforts to revitalize and maintain indigenous languages.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

It is undeniable that the colonial project implemented by force in the Americas continues to have repercussions today for all aspects of indigenous knowledge, ways of life, cultures, and languages. However, at the same time indigenous people have been resisting, adapting, and negotiating colonial institutions and policies for over five hundred years. To survive in a system where indigenous peoples have been regarded as inferior, certain negotiations have taken place and have been detrimental for our languages, which have been a target of assimilation for centuries. As a result, today we are seeing drastic language shifts to dominant nation-state languages in many indigenous communities. The stigmatization and discrimination of coloniality that has been evoked through education, society and institutions have negatively impacted Indigenous languages. The internalization of this colonial view has convinced many Indigenous peoples that our languages are 'useless', that there is no place for them in 'modernity'. Nonetheless, many communities today are beginning to consider and plan language revitalization to strengthen the language element of collective identity. This process is also about social justice for the violence, discrimination, and racism that was and continues to be experienced through these efforts of assimilation.

In the preceding chapters I have made two arguments regarding Zapotec language shift and revitalization in Tlacochahuaya, a community with Spanish language contact since the mid-1500s and one with a migrant diaspora throughout Mexico and the United States. First, the negative educational experience that community members endured in which the Zapotec language use was prohibited and punished, especially from the 1930s-

1950s, impacted them in such a way that some chose to raise their children in the Spanish language so as to protect them from a similar schooling experience. The education that was implemented and introduced in Tlacochahuaya in the generation of those who are now elders (60 years and older) was ideologically tied to the nation building project which had as a goal to *castellanizar* (Hispanicize) and "modernize" rural and Indigenous communities. This negative educational experience influenced a change in socialization practices and has given rise to language shift from Zapotec to Spanish for the last four generations.

Even though the Spanish language transcended the classroom and entered the realm of the home; due to the domain of the Zapotec language within the community some of those who were raised in Spanish were able to learn Zapotec through their peers and/or with a Zapotec monolingual relative. Thus, the language shift that has been taking place over the course of four generations has resulted in a multiple language repertoire where today the majority of elders and adults are Zapotec-Spanish bilinguals. However, the gray area, often overlooked by statistics and community members, is the varied amount and degree of Zapotec passive bilinguals amongst the adult and youth generation. Nonetheless, it is in the youth and children generational group where we see the majority of Spanish monolinguals. Likewise, language socialization is not solely about transmitting a linguistic code, and through Spanish socialization the negative educational experience of elders has also been transmitted. This narrative is attributed as one of the reasons why the Zapotec language is no longer transmitted and taught. Along with transmission of this traumatic historical memory, Spanish language socialization

continues to reproduce language ideologies that devalue Zapotec.

Second, to gain further support the San Jerónimo Tlacochahuaya Zapotec language revitalization efforts need to encompass a process of community wide reflection and healing surrounding negative schooling experiences. There is also a critical need to demystify the language ideologies that continue to label the Zapotec language as 'useless'. Though there is a community wide awareness regarding the decline in Zapotec language transmission, language revitalization efforts have not caught on because a community wide process of reflection regarding this issue has yet to occur. In other words, we have not quite analyzed and critically challenged the language ideologies that continue to devalue the Zapotec language and Zapotec-Spanish bilingualism. However, what also complicates this process are the socioeconomic conditions that require the use and fluency of Spanish for jobs and administrative purposes, as well as the long working shifts which often leave very little time to dedicate to these efforts.

Initially I thought that doing research on my community's experience with Zapotec language loss and revitalization efforts would be one where at the end I could provide solid answers and solutions to reverse this language shift. Foremost, this research project has given me a deeper understanding of the negative experiences of community members with Zapotec language stigmatization and has helped me reconcile that elders choosing not to transmit the Zapotec language was their way of protecting us from discrimination. Knowing this history has given me the energy to reach out to elders, adults, youth, and children to engage in conversations about *recuperando nuestro idioma*

(recuperating out language) as a decolonial praxis to be able to transmit our language to future generations.

The fact that community members, in Oaxaca and in the diaspora, still speak Zapotec today is a testament to the resistance of an education and ideology that assigns our language no value. If that was the case, people would have ceased from speaking it, but it continues to be spoken today even though its transmission is in decline. If raising children with the Spanish language was a strategy to avoid further punishment at school, and to increase employment opportunities, why have we not challenged this history and consider bilingualism? What does it mean to speak and maintain our Zapotec language for our community? I understand and acknowledge that discrimination continues to exist, we have much to learn about our own language structure, and we have yet to accept that indigenous languages have a place and utility in "modernity".

There is a need for a community-wide discussion, including the diaspora, to further discuss and understand how language shift has taken place in our communities. While education prohibited the use of Zapotec in the classroom and encouraged parents to stop using the language with their children, we see resistance in the narratives of younger elders and adults that were children in the 1940s-1950s. We even see how some who entered school with Spanish knowledge were able to obtain Zapotec language acquisition through peer socialization. The practice of raising children with Spanish is contributing to Zapotec language loss and reducing the domain of the Zapotec language. Today Spanish is the quotidian language of our community members and through other media English is beginning to permeate. Nonetheless, we are still capable of reversing

language shift by reintroducing Zapotec language socialization at home. We need to discuss the possibility of bilingualism and/or trilingualism, options that have not been considered for our community. We also need to demystify language acquisition, which will reveal that learning Zapotec does not interfere with the process of Spanish language acquisition. For those with passive knowledge, we need to provide the opportunities for developing language fluency, and need to take advantage of the number of fluent speakers both in the US and Mexico.

Within these language revitalization efforts we need a process of decolonization to challenge the negative notions that the colonial project and most recently, the nation building project, has instilled upon us, and we have internalized. One of the first steps is to discuss with each other, including the diaspora, if and how we want to approach our language. If it is no longer a code that is needed to communicate in the community, then what utility and/or function can we give it for its maintenance? While we have been able to maintain, reproduce and recreate our traditions and culture using the Spanish language, we also view our language as one of the elements that gives us a distinctive collective identity as *Bn'zunni*, as people from Tlacochahuaya.

Maintenance of languages at risk is a challenge in itself when the speech community is geographically located in the same region. Through language contact, policies, ideologies, and the decline of intergenerational transmission many of the world's minority languages today are at risk of being lost from the language repertoire. However, indigenous languages from Latin American face yet another obstacle in the sense that many speakers of these languages are migrating, particularly to the United

States. Often these Latin American indigenous languages are endangered in the home community, thus in moving with their speakers they become transnational endangered languages, as described by Pérez Báez (2009). While migrant indigenous language speakers do not completely cease speaking the language, there is an increasing decline in language transmission to children. The language choices of the migrant diaspora have consequences for the vitality of the language back at home, and language socialization practices and ideologies of the home community are also carried with migrants. Thus, there is a transnational link of influence between indigenous language home communities and migrant groups. Language revitalization research needs to support and propose transnational language revitalization efforts that promote indigenous language maintenance among the home community and the migrant diaspora so as to maintain transnational endangered languages. This will not be an easy task because as the literature demonstrates, language revitalization in home communities requires commitment, identifying language ideologies, and reversing socialization practices that contribute to language loss. These efforts are urgent for speech communities with a migrant diaspora and/or where the hometown nowadays has a smaller population than in the diaspora.

One of the main limitations of my study is that it was solely conducted in Tlacochahuaya. There is a need for transnational research amongst the migrant diaspora to further understand their experiences with the Zapotec language in the US and Mexico. Further research could focus on why some people that had a negative education experience, which prohibited and punished Zapotec language use, continued to socialize and raise their children with the Zapotec language? Simply recognizing indigenous

language rights does not lead to a reorientation of peoples negative beliefs and valuing of their languages. How do we include a process of decolonization within language revitalization projects?

I pursued graduate studies to develop my research skills to make a contribution to my community. My most sincere and humble hope is that this thesis will serve to further advance the conversation on indigenous language revitalization and discussion on decolonial praxis in my community and for other communties in a similar situation. This research project, in which I have a role as a researcher and member of the community, was an intellectual and emotional challenge. While getting acquainted with the literature and through class discussions, I have had to confront that the politics, history, and legacy of colonialism have contributed to a complex set of tensions and conditions of Indigenity. This means that today there is a lot of work pending to untangle the impacts of colonial legacies and history that have created an inferior and oppressive view of Indigenous peoples. There is a need for us to recover our stories, maintain our practices, knowledge, and languages to challenge this colonial view. However, this is also needed to heal and liberate ourselves from years of colonial oppression and stigmatization.

This research also challenged me to be critical and reflective of my position. While growing up I was able to visit family in Mexico, which helped me strengthen and maintain my Mexican identity. However, it was through my college educational experience where I found peer support that encouraged me to learn about my Indigenous roots and identity. Thus, my interest for Indigenous knowledge and languages has been acquired from a lived experience where I had the time, privilege, and resources to think

and write about these topics. Likewise, I have been able to engage in a process of reclaiming my Zapotec identity while not experiencing the same levels of discrimination faced by my family for speaking Zapotec, or being an indigenous migrant in the United States. For these reasons, I am committed to further engage with my community to reclaim linguistic spaces. To uphold the arguments that I have made in this thesis, the next step is for me to learn the Zapotec language from my mother, grandfather, family and community members. I am ready to take the journey to *recuperar nuestro idioma Zapoteco* (to recuperate our Zapotec language) and I hope that others will join to honor our community's history, knowledge, traditions and our ancestors' resistance to the Spanish language for over 400 years.

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